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The Bramleighs of Bishop's Folly.

CHAPTER LXI.

LADY CULDUFF'S LETTER.

A

LONG letter, a letter of several pages, from Marion reached the villa ; and though it is not my intention to ask the reader to listen to it textually or throughout, I crave permission to give certain parts of its contents.



As Lady Culduff prospered in the world, she became what she thought "devout," and perpetually reminded all around her that she was well aware she was living in a very sinful world, and keeping daily company with transgressors ; and she actually brought herself to believe that by a repeated reference to the wickedness of this life, she was entering a formal protest against

sin, and qualifying herself, at this very cheap price, for something much better hereafter.

She was—and it was a pet phrase with her—"resigned" to everything : resigned to Lord Culduff's being made a grand cross and an ambassador, with the reasonable prospect of an earldom ; resigned to her own great part—and was it not a great part?—in this advancement ; resigned to be an ambassadress ! That she was resigned to the ruin and downfall

of her family, especially if they should have the delicacy and good taste to hide themselves somewhere, and not obtrude that ruin and downfall on the world, was plainly manifest; and when she averred that, come what might, we ought to be ever assured that all things were for the best, she meant in reality to say it was a wise dispensation that sent herself to live in a palace at Pera, and left her brothers and sisters to shiver out existence in barbarism.

There was not a shadow of hypocrisy in all this. She believed every word she said upon it. She accepted the downfall of her family as her share of those ills which are the common lot of humanity; and she was very proud of the fortitude that sustained her under this heavy trial, and of that resignation that enabled her not to grieve over these things in an unseemly fashion, or in any way that might tell on her complexion.

"After that splendid success of Culduff's at Naples," wrote she, "of which the newspapers are full, I need not remind you that we ought to have had Paris, and, indeed, must have had it, but the Ministry made it a direct and personal favour of Culduff that he would go and set that troublesome Eastern question to rights. As you know nothing of politics, dear Nelly, and, indeed, are far happier in that ignorance, I shall not enter upon what, even with the fullest explanation, would only bewilder you. Enough if you know that we have to out-manceuvre the Russians, baffle the French, and bully the Greeks; and that there is not for the task Culduff's equal in England. I think I see your astonishment that I should talk of such themes: they were not certainly the sort of subjects which once occupied our thoughts; but, my dear Nelly, in linking your fate to that of a man of high ambition, you accept the companionship of his intellect, instead of a share in his heart. And, as you well know I always repudiated the curate and cottage theory, I accept the alternative without repining. Can I teach you any of this philosophy, Nelly, and will it lighten the load of your own sorrows to learn how I have come to bear mine? It is in the worldliness of people generally lies their chief unhappiness. They will not, as Culduff says, 'accept the situation.' Now we have accepted it, we submit to it, and, in consequence, suffer fewer heartburnings and repinings than our neighbours. Dear Augustus never had any costly tastes; and as for yourself, simplicity was your badge in everything. Temple is indeed to be pitied, for Temple, with money to back him, might have made a respectable figure in the world and married well; but Temple a poor man, must fall down to a second-class legation, and look over the Minister's larder. Culduff tried, but failed to make something of him. As C. told him one day, you have only to see Charles Mathews act, to be convinced that to be a coxcomb, a man must be consummately clever; and yet it is exactly the 'rôle' every empty fellow fancies would suit him. T. resented this, well meant as it was, and resigned his secretaryship. He has gone over to England, but I do not imagine with much prospect of re-employment.

"Do not think, my dear Nelly, of quitting your present refuge. You are safe now, and in harbour, and be slow to adventure on that wide

ocean of life where shipwrecks are occurring on every hand. So long as one is obscure, poverty has no terrors. As Culduff says, you may always wear a ragged coat in the dark. It is we, who unfortunately must walk in the noonday, cannot be seen unless in fine raiment. Do not mistake me, however. I say this without complaint; I repine at nothing.

"I had written so much of my letter, dear Nelly, intending to finish it at Rome; but Culduff is obliged to hurry on to Ischl, where some great diplomatic gathering is now assembled, and I must omit a number of things I desire to say to you.

"Culduff thinks we must call on Lady Augusta as we go through. I own I have done my best to avoid this, and if I must go, it will not be in the best of tempers. The oddest thing of all is, C. dislikes her fully as much as I do; but there is some wonderful freemasonry among these people that obliges them, like the members of a secret society, to certain 'égards' towards each other; and I am satisfied he would rather do a positive wrong to some one in middle-class life than be wanting in some punctilio or attention to a person of her condition. I have often been much provoked by displays of this sentiment, needlessly paraded to offend my own sense of propriety. I shall add a line after my visit.

"Rome.

"I have news for you. M. Pracontal—if this be his name—not only takes your estates, but your stepmother. The odious woman had the effrontery to tell us so to our faces. How I bore it, what I said, or felt or suffered, I know not. Some sort of fit, I believe, seized me, for Culduff sent for a physician when I got back to the hotel, and our departure was deferred.

"The outrage of this conduct has so shaken my nerves that I can scarcely write, nor is my sense of indignation lessened by the levity with which it pleases Culduff to treat the whole matter. 'It is a bold coup—a less courageous woman would have recoiled from it—she is very daring.' This is what he says of her. She has the courage that says to the world, 'I am ready to meet all your censures and your reproaches;' but I never heard this called heroism before. Must I own to you, Nelly, that what overwhelms me most in this disgraceful event is the confidence it evinces in this man's cause. 'You may swear,' said Culduff, 'that she is backing the winner. Women are timid gamblers, and never risk their money without almost every chance in their favour.' I know that my lord plumes himself on knowing a great deal about us, prompting him at times to utter much that is less than complimentary; but I give you this opinion of his here for what it is worth, frankly owning that my dislike to the woman is such I can be no fair judge of any case into which she enters.

"Pracontal—I only saw him for an instant—struck me as a third-class Frenchman, something between a 'sous-officier' of cavalry and a commis-voyageur; not ill-looking, and set up with that air of the soldier that in France does duty for dignity. He had a few hasty words with Culduff, but did not persist nor show any desire to make a row in presence

of ladies. So far, his instincts as a corporal guided him safely. Had he been led by the commis-voyageur side of his character, we should have had a most disgraceful scene, ending by a hostile meeting between a British peer and a bagman.

"My nerves have been so shaken by this incident, and my recollection is still so charged with this odious woman's look, voice, and manner, that I cannot trust myself to say more. Be assured, dear Nelly, that in all the miserable details of this great calamity to our family, no one event has occurred equal in poignant suffering to the insult I have thus been subjected to.

"Culduff will not agree to it, but I declare to you she was positively vulgar in the smirking complacency in which she presented the man as her future husband. She was already *passée* when she married my father, and the exuberant joy at this proposal revealed the old maid's nature. C., of course, calls her charming, a woman of very attractive qualities, and such like; but men of a certain age have ideas of their own on these subjects, and, like their notions on cookery, make no converts among people under forty. I believe I told him so, and, in consequence, the whole theme has been strictly avoided by each of us ever since."

The remainder of the letter was devoted to details as to her future life at Constantinople, and the onerous duties that would devolve on her as ambassadress. She hinted also to a time when she would ask dear Nelly to come and visit her; but, of course, until matters were fully settled and concluded, she could not expect her to leave dear Gusty.

The postscript ran thus:—"Culduff meant to have given some small Church promotion to young L'Estrange, and, indeed, believed he had done so; but some difficulty has arisen. It is either not his turn, or the Bishop is troublesome, or the Ecclesiastical Commissioners—if there be such people—are making objections. If he—I mean L'Estrange—be still disengaged, would it be wise to offer him the chaplaincy to the embassy? I mean wise as regards ourselves; for I take it the sister may be still unmarried, and, if she be like what I remember her, a person not easily suppressed, nor at all indisposed to assume airs of perfect equality, even with those separated from her by a whole hemisphere of station. Give me your candid advice on this point, not thinking of *them*, but of *me*, for, though I feel Julia—is not that her name?—would be insupportable, the parson himself would be very useful, and I think a comfort to me.

"Of course you will not consult any one upon this matter. It is your own personal opinion I want, and you will give it to me, knowing me and my prejudices—I suppose I had better call them—and not thinking of your own leanings and likings for the girl. She may, for aught I know, have changed. Culduff has some wise saw about acid wines growing dry by age; I don't know whether young ladies mellow in this fashion, but Julia was certainly tart enough once to have tested the theory, and might be the '*Amontillado*' of old maids by this time."

It may be imagined that after a sally of this kind it was not easy for

the writer to recover that semi-moralizing vein in which the letter opened. Nor did she. The conclusion was abrupt, and merely directed Nelly to address her next to the Summer Palace at Therapia; "for those horrid people, our predecessors, have left the embassy-house in such a condition it will take weeks and several thousand pounds to make it habitable. There must be a vote taken 'in supply' on this. I am writing Greek to you, poor child; but I mean they must give us money, and, of course, the discussion will expose us to many impertinences. One writer declared that he never knew of a debate on the estimates without an allusion to Lord Culduff's wig. We shall endure this—if not with patience, without resentment. Love to dear Gusty, and believe me your affectionate sister,
"MARION CULDUFF."

Such were the most striking passages of a long letter which, fortunately for Nelly, Mr. Cutbill's presence at the breakfast-table rescued her from the indiscretion of reading aloud. One or two extracts she did give, but soon saw that the document was one which could not be laid on the table, nor given without prejudice to the public service. Her confusion, as she crumpled up the paper, and thrust it back into its envelope, was quickly remarked, and Mr. Cutbill, with his accustomed tact, observed, "I'd lay a 'fiver' we've all of us been led out for a canter in that epistle. It's enough to see Miss Ellen's face to know that she wouldn't read it out for fifty pounds. Eh, what!" cried he, stooping and rubbing his leg; "I told you to say, 'Stop her,' Master Jack, when you wanted to take way off, but I never said, Kick my shins."

This absurd exclamation, and the laugh it provoked, was a lucky diversion, and they arose from table without another thought on Marion's epistle.

"Has Nelly shown you Marion's note?" asked Jack, as he strolled with Julia through the garden.

"No, and it is perhaps the only letter I ever knew her to get without handing me to read."

"I suspect, with Cutbill, that we all of us catch it in that pleasant document."

"You perhaps are the only one who has escaped."

"As for me, I am not even remembered. Well, I'll bear even that, if I can be sure of a little sympathy in another quarter."

"Master Jack, you ask for too many professions. I have told you already to-day, and I don't mean to repeat it for a week, that you are not odious to me."

"But will you not remember, Julia, the long months of banishment I have suffered? Will you not bear in mind that if I have lived longingly for this moment, it is cruel now to dash it with a doubt."

"But it is exactly what I am not doing! I have given you fully as much encouragement as is good for you. I have owned—and it is a rash confession for a girl to make at any time—that I care for you more than

any part of our prospects for the future could warrant, and if I go one step further there will be nothing for it but for you to buy a bragotza and turn fisherman, and for me to get a basket and sell pilchards in the piazza."

"You needn't taunt me with my poverty, I feel it bitterly enough already. Nor have you any right to think me unable to win a living."

"There, again, you wrong me. I only said, Do not, in your impatience to reach your goal, make it not worth the winning. Don't forget what I told you about long engagements. A man's share of them is the worst."

"But you love me, Julia?" said he, drawing her close to him.

"How tiresome you are!" said she, trying to free herself from his arm.

"Let me once—only once—hear you say this, and I swear to you, Julia, I'll never tease you more."

"Well, then, if I must——"

More was not spoken, for the lips were pressed by a rapturous kiss, as he clasped her to his heart, muttering, "My own, my own!"

"I declare there is Nelly," cried Julia, wresting herself from his embrace, and starting off; not, however, towards Ellen, but in the direction of the house.

"Oh, Nelly," said Jack, rushing towards his sister, "she loves me—she has said so—she is all my own."

"Of course she is, Jack. I never doubted it, though I own I scarcely thought she'd have told it."

And the brother and sister walked along hand in hand without speaking, a closer pressure of the fingers at intervals alone revealing how they followed the same thoughts and lived in the same joys.

CHAPTER LXII.

DEALING WITH CUTBILL.

"WHAT'S to be done with Cutbill?—will any one tell me this?" was the anxious question Augustus asked as he stood in a group composed of Jack, Nelly, and the L'Estranges. "As to Sedley meeting him at all, I know that is out of the question; but the mere fact of finding the man here will so discredit us in Sedley's eyes that it is more than likely he will pitch up the whole case and say good-by to us for ever."

"But can he do that?" asked Julia. "Can he, I mean, permit a matter of temper or personal feeling to interfere in a dry affair of duty?"

"Of course he can; where his counsels are disregarded and even counteracted he need not continue his guidance. He is a hot-tempered man besides, and has more than once shown me that he will not bear provocation beyond certain limits."

"I think," began L'Estrange, "if I were in *your* place, I'd tell Cutbill. I'd explain to him how matters stood; and——"

"No, no," broke in Jack; "that won't do at all. The poor dog is too hard up for that."

"Jack is right," said Nelly, warmly.

"Of course he is, so far as Mr. Cutbill goes," broke in Julia; "but we want to do right to every one. Now, how about your brother and his suit?"

"What if I were to show him this letter," said Augustus, "to let him see that Sedley means to be here to-morrow, to remain at farthest three days; is it not likely Cutbill would himself desire to avoid meeting him?"

"Not a bit of it," cried Jack. "It's the thing of all others he'd glory in; he'd be full of all the lively impertinences that he could play off on the lawyer; and he'd write a comic song on him,—ay, and sing it in his own presence."

"Nothing more likely," said Julia, gravely.

"Then what is to be done? Is there no escape out of the difficulty?" asked Augustus.

"Yes," said Nelly, "I think there is. The way I should advise would be this: I'd show Mr. Cutbill Sedley's letter, and taking him into counsel, as it were, on the embarrassment of his own position, I'd say, 'We must hide you somewhere for these three days.'"

"But he wouldn't see it, Nelly. He'd laugh at your delicate scruples; he'd say, 'That's the one man in all Europe I'm dying to meet.'"

"Nelly is quite right, notwithstanding," said Julia. "There is more than one side to Mr. Cutbill's nature. He'd like to be thought a very punctilious gentleman fully as much as a very jocose companion. Make him believe that in keeping out of sight here at this moment he will be exercising a most refined delicacy,—doing what nothing short of a high-bred sensibility would ever have dreamed of, and you'll see he'll be as delighted with his part as ever he was with his coarse drollery. And here he comes to test my theory about him."

As she spoke Cutbill came lounging up the garden walk, too busily engaged in making a paper cigarette to see those in front of him.

"I'm sure Mr. Cutbill that cigarette must be intended for me," cried Julia, "seeing all the pains you are bestowing on its manufacture."

"Ah, Miss Julia, if I could only believe that you'd let me corrupt your morals to the extent of a pinch of Latakia——"

"Give me Sedley's letter, Gusty," said Nelly, "and leave the whole arrangement to me. Mr. Cutbill, will you kindly let me have three minutes of your company. I want a bit of advice from you." And she took his arm as she spoke and led him down the garden. She wasted no time in preliminaries, but at once came to the point, saying, "We're in what you would call 'a fix' this morning, Mr. Cutbill: my brother's lawyer, Mr. Sedley, is coming here most unexpectedly. We know that some unpleasant passages have occurred between you and that gentleman, making a meeting between you quite impossible; and in the great difficulty

of the moment I have charged myself with the solution of the embarrassment, and now begin to see that without your aid I am powerless. Will you help me; that is, will you advise with or for me?"

"Of course I will; but, first of all, where's the difficulty you speak of? I'd no more mind meeting this man,—sitting next him at dinner, if you like, than I would an old creditor—and I have a good many of them—that I never mean to pay."

"We never doubted *your* tact, Mr. Cutbill," said she, with a strong emphasis on the pronoun.

"If so, then the matter is easy enough. Tact always serves for two. If I be the man you take me for, that crabbed old fellow will love me like a brother before the first day is over."

"That's not the question, Mr. Cutbill. Your personal powers of captivation no one disputes, if only they get a fair field for their exercise; but what we fear is that Mr. Sedley, being the hot-tempered, hasty man he is, will not give you this chance. My brother has twice already been on the verge of a rupture with him for having acted on his own independent judgment. I believe nothing but his regard for poor dear papa would have made him forgive Augustus; and when I tell you that in the present critical state of our cause his desertion of us would be fatal, I am sure you will do anything to avert such a calamity."

"Let us meet, Miss Ellen; let us dine together once—I only ask once—and if I don't borrow money from him before he takes his bedroom candle, you may scratch Tom Cutbill, and put him off 'the course' for ever. What does that impatient shrug of the shoulders mean? Is it as much as to say, 'What a conceited snob it is!' eh?"

"Oh, Mr. Cutbill, you couldn't possibly——"

"Couldn't I though? And don't I know well that I am just as vain of my little talents,—as your friend, Miss Julia, called them,—as you and others are ready to ridicule them; but the real difference between us after all is this: *You* think the world at large is a monstrous clever creature, with great acuteness, great discrimination and great delicacy; and I *know* it to be a great overgrown bully, mistaking half it hears, and blundering all it says, so that any one, I don't care who he is, that will stand out from the crowd in life, think his own thoughts and guide his own actions, may just do what he pleases with that unwieldy old monster, making it believe it's the master, all the while it is a mere slave and a drudge. There's another shrug of the shoulders. Why not say it out—you're a puppy, Tom Cutbill?"

"First of all it wouldn't be polite, and secondly——"

"Never mind the secondly. It's quite enough for me to see that I have not convinced you, nor am I half as clever a fellow as I think myself; and do you know, you're the first I ever knew dispute the position."

"But I do not. I subscribe to it implicitly; my presence here, at this moment, attests how I believe it. It is exactly because I regard

Mr. Cutbill as the cleverest person I know—the very ablest to extricate one from a difficulty—that I have come to him this morning.”

“My honour is satisfied!” said he, laying his hand on his heart, and bowing with a grand seriousness.

“And now,” said Nelly, hurriedly, for her patience had well nigh given in, “what’s to be done? I have a project of my own, but I don’t know whether you would agree to it.”

“Not agree to a project of yours! What do you take me for, Miss Ellen?”

“My dear Mr. Cutbill, I have exhausted all my compliments. I can only say I endorse all the preceding with compound interest.”

Slightly piqued by the half sarcasm of her manner, he simply said—
“And your project; what is it?”

“That you should be a close prisoner for the short time Mr. Sedley stays here; sufficiently near to be able to communicate and advise with you—for we count much on your counsel—and yet totally safe from even the chance of meeting him. There is a small chapel about a mile off, where the family confessor used to live, in two neat little rooms adjoining the building. These shall be made comfortable for you. We will take care—I will—that you are not starved; and some of us will be sure to go and see you every day, and report all that goes on. I foresee a number of details, but I have no time now to discuss them; the great point is, do you agree?”

“This is Miss Julia’s scheme, is it not?”

“No, I assure you; on my word it is mine.”

“But you have concerted it with her?”

“Not even that; she knows nothing of it.”

“With whom, then, have you talked it over?”

“With none, save Mr. Cutbill.”

“In that case, Mr. Cutbill complies,” said he, with a theatrical air of condescension.

“You will go there?”

“Yes, I promise it.”

“And remain close prisoner till I liberate you?”

“Everything you command.”

“I thank you much, and I am very proud of my success,” said she, offering her hand. “Shall I own to you,” said she, after a pause, “that my brother’s nerves have been so shaken by the agitation he has passed through, and by the continual pressure of thinking that it is his own personal fault that this battle has been so ill contested, that the faintest show of censure on him now would be more than he could bear. I have little doubt that the cause is lost, and I am only eager that poor Augustus should not feel it was lost through *him*.”

She was greatly agitated as she spoke, and, with a hurried farewell, she turned and left him.

CHAPTER LXIII.

THE CLIENT AND HIS LAWYER.

WHEN the rest of the party had left the dinner-room, and Augustus Bramleigh and Mr. Sedley found themselves alone, a silence of several minutes ensued; a very solemn pause each felt it, well knowing that at such a moment the slightest word may be the signal for disclosures which involve a destiny. Up to this, nothing had been said on either side of "the cause;" and though Sedley had travelled across Europe to speak of it, he waited with decorous reserve till his host should invite him to the topic.

Bramleigh, an awkward and timid man at the best of times, was still more so when he found himself in a situation in which he should give the initiative. As the entertainer of a guest, too, he fancied that to introduce his personal interests as matter of conversation would be in bad taste, and so he fidgeted, and passed the decanters across the table with a nervous impatience, trying to seem at his ease, and stammering out at last some unmeaning question about the other's journey.

Sedley replied to the inquiry with a cold and measured politeness, as a man might to a matter purely irrelevant.

"The Continent is comparatively new ground to you, Mr. Sedley?"

"Entirely so. I have never been beyond Brussels before this."

"Late years have nearly effaced national peculiarities. One crosses frontiers now, and never remembers a change of country."

"Quite so."

"The money, the coinage, perhaps, is the great reminder after all."

"Money is the great reminder of almost everything everywhere, sir," said Sedley, with a stern and decisive tone.

"I am afraid you are right," said Bramleigh, with a faint sigh, and now they seemed to stand on the brink of a precipice, and look over.

"What news have you for me?" said he at last, gulping as he spoke.

"None to cheer, nothing to give encouragement. The discovery at Castello will ensure them a verdict. We cannot dispute the marriage, it was solemnized in all form and duly witnessed. The birth of the child was also carefully authenticated—there isn't a flaw in the registry, and they'll take care to remind us on the second trial of how freely we scattered our contemptuous sarcasms on the illegitimacy of this connexion on the first record."

"Is the case hopeless then?"

"Nothing is hopeless where a jury enters, but it is only short of hopeless. Kelson of course says he is sure, and perhaps so should I, in his place. Still they might disagree again: there's a strong repugnance felt by juries against dispossessing an old occupant. All can feel the hardship of his case, and the sympathy for him goes a great way."

"Still this would only serve to protract matters,—they'd bring another action."

"Of course they would, and Kelson has money!"

"I declare I see no benefit in continuing a hopeless contest."

"Don't be hopeless then, that's the remedy."

Bramleigh made a slight gesture of impatience, and slight as it was, Sedley observed it.

"You have never treated this case as your father would have done, Mr. Bramleigh. He had a rare spirit to face a contest. I remember one day hinting to him that if this claim could be backed by money it would be a very formidable suit, and his answer was:—'When I strike my flag, Sedley, the enemy will find the prize was scarcely worth fighting for.' I knew what he meant was, he'd have mortgaged the estate to every shilling of its value, before there arose a question of his title."

"I don't believe it, sir; I tell you to your face I don't believe it," cried Bramleigh, passionately. "My father was a man of honour, and never would have descended to such duplicity."

"My dear, sir, I have not come twelve hundred miles to discuss a question in ethics, nor will I risk myself in a discussion with you. I repeat, sir, that had your father lived to meet this contention, we should not have found ourselves where we are to-day. Your father was a man of considerable capacity, Mr. Bramleigh. He conducted a large and important house with consummate skill; brought up his family handsomely; and had he been spared, would have seen every one of them in positions of honour and consequence."

"To every word in his praise I subscribe heartily and gratefully;" and there was a tremor in his voice as Bramleigh spoke.

"He has been spared a sad spectacle, I must say," continued Sedley.

"With the exception of your sister who married that viscount, ruin—there's only one word for it—ruin has fallen upon you all."

"Will you forgive me if I remind you that you are my lawyer, Mr. Sedley, not my chaplain, nor my confessor."

"Lawyer without a suit! Why, my dear sir, there will be soon nothing to litigate. You and all belonging to you were an imposition and a fraud. There, there! It's nothing to grow angry over; how could you or any of you suspect your father's legitimacy? You accepted the situation as you found it, as all of us do. That you regarded Pracontal as a cheat was no fault of yours,—he says so himself. I have seen him and talked with him; he was at Kelson's when I called last week, and old Kelson said,—'My client is in the next room: he says you treated him rudely one day he went to your office. I wish you'd step in and say a civil word or two. It would do good, Sedley. I tell you, it would do good!' and he laid such a significant stress on the word, that I walked straight in and said how very sorry I felt for having expressed myself in a way that could offend him. 'At all events, sir,' said I, 'if you will not accept my apology for myself, let me beseech you to separate the interest of my client from my rudeness, and let not Mr. Bramleigh be prejudiced because his lawyer was ill-mannered.' 'It's all forgotten, never to be recalled,' said he,

shaking my hand. 'Has Kelson told you my intentions towards Bramleigh?'

" 'He has told me nothing,' said I.

" 'Tell him, Kelson. I can't make the matter plain as you can. Tell Mr. Sedley what we were thinking of.'

" 'In one word, sir, his plan was a partition of the property. He would neither disturb your title, nor dispute your name. You should be the Bramleighs of Castello, merely paying him a rentcharge of four thousand a year. Kelson suggested more, but he said a hundred thousand francs was ample, and he made no scruple of adding that he never was master of as many sous in his life.

" 'And what does Kelson say to this?' asked I.

" 'Kelson says what Sedley would say—that it is a piece of Quixotism worthy of Hanwell.'

" 'Ma foi,' said Pracontal, 'it is not the first time I have fired in the air.'

" 'We talked for two hours over the matter. Part of what Pracontal said was good sound sense, well reasoned and acutely expressed; part was sentimental rubbish, not fit to listen to. At last I obtained leave to submit the whole affair to you, not by letter—that they wouldn't have—but personally, and there, in one word, is the reason of my journey.

" 'Before I left town, however, I saw the Attorney-General, whose opinion I had already taken on certain points of the case. He was a personal friend of your father, and willingly entered upon it. When I told him Pracontal's proposal he smiled dubiously, and said, 'Why, it's a confession of defeat; the man must know his case will break down, or he never would offer such conditions.'

" 'I tried to persuade him that without knowing, seeing, hearing this Frenchman, it would not be easy to imagine such an action proceeding from a sane man, but that his exalted style of talk and his inflated sentimentality made the thing credible. He wants to belong to a family, to be owned and accepted as some one's relative. The man is dying of the shame of his isolation.

" 'Let him marry.'

" 'So he means, and I hear to Bramleigh's widow, Lady Augusta.'

" 'He laughed heartily at this and said, 'It's the only encumbrance on the property.' And now, Mr. Bramleigh, you are to judge, if you can; is this the offer of generosity, or is it the crafty proposal of a beaten adversary? I don't mean to say it is an easy point to decide on, or that a man can hit it off at once. Consult those about you; take into consideration the situation you stand in and all its dangers; bethink you what an adverse verdict may bring if we push them to a trial; and even if the proposal be, as Mr. Attorney thinks, the cry of weakness, is it wise to disregard it?'

" 'Would you have laid such a proposal before my father, Sedley?'

said Bramleigh, with a scarcely perceptible smile.

" 'Not for five hundred pounds, sir.'

"I thought not."

"Ay, but remember your father would never have landed us where we stand now, Mr. Bramleigh."

Augustus winced under this remark, but said nothing.

"If the case be what you think it, Sedley," said he at last, "this is a noble offer."

"So say I."

"There is much to think over in it. If I stood alone here, and if my own were the only interests involved, I think—that is I hope—I know what answer I should give; but there are others. You have seen my sister; you thought she looked thin and delicate—and she may well do so, her cares overtax her strength; and my poor brother too, that fine-hearted fellow, what is to become of *him*? And yet, Sedley," cried he suddenly, "if either of them were to suspect that this—this—what shall I call it?—this arrangement—stood on no basis of right, but was simply an act of generous forbearance, I'd stake my life on it, they'd refuse it."

"You must not consult *them* then, that's clear."

"But I will not decide till I do so."

"Oh, for five minutes—only five minutes—of your poor father's strong sense and sound intellect, and I might send off my telegram to-night." And with this speech, delivered slowly and determinately, the old man arose, took his bed-room candle, and walked away.

CHAPTER LXIV.

A FIRST GLEAM OF LIGHT.

AFTER a sleepless, anxious night, in which he canvassed all that Sedley had told him, Bramleigh presented himself at Jack's bedside as the day was breaking. Though the sailor was not worldly-wise, nor endowed with much knowledge of life, he had, as Augustus knew, a rough and ready judgment which, allied to a spirit of high honour, rarely failed in detecting that course which in the long run proved best. Jack, too, was no casuist, no hair-splitter; he took wide, commonplace views, and in this way was sure to do what nine out of ten ordinary men would approve of, and this was the sort of counsel that Bramleigh now desired to set side by side with his own deeply considered opinion.

Jack listened attentively to his brother's explanation, not once interrupting him by a word or a question till he had finished, and then, laying his hand gently on the other's, said, "You know well, Gusty, that you couldn't do this."

"I thought you would say so, Jack."

"You'd be a fool to part with what you owned, or a knave to sell what did not belong to you."

"My own judgment precisely."

"I'd not bother myself then with Sedley's pros and cons, nor entertain

the question about saving what one could out of the wreck. If you haven't a right to a plank in the ship, you have no right to her because she is on the rocks. Say 'No,' Gusty; say 'No' at once."

"It would be at best a compromise on the life of one man, for Pracontal's son, if he should leave one, could revive the claim."

"Don't let us go so far, Gusty. Let us deal with the case as it stands before us. Say 'No,' and have done with the matter at once."

Augustus leaned his head between his hands and fell into a deep vein of thought.

"You've had your trial of humble fortune now, Gusty," continued Jack, "and I don't see that it has soured you; I see no signs of fretting or irritability about you, old fellow; I'll even say that I never remember you jollier or heartier. Isn't it true, this sort of life has no terror for you?"

"Think of Nelly, Jack."

"Nelly is better able to brave hard fortune than either of us. She never was spoiled when we were rich, and she had no pretensions to lay down when we became poor."

"And yourself, my poor fellow? I've had many a plan of what I meant by you."

"Never waste a thought about me. I'll buy a trabaccolo. They're the handiest coasting craft that ever sailed; and I'll see if the fruit-trade in the Levant won't feed me, and we'll live here, Gusty, all together. Come now, tell me frankly, would you exchange that for Castello, if you had to go back there and live alone—eh?"

"I'll not say I would; but——"

"There's no 'but;' the thing is clear and plain enough. This place wouldn't suit Marion or Temple; but they'll not try it. Take my word for it, of all our fine acquaintances, not one will ever come down here to see how we bear our reduced lot in life. We'll start fresh in the race, and we'll talk of long ago and our grand times without a touch of repining."

"I'm quite ready to try it, Jack."

"That's well said," said he, grasping his hand, and pressing it affectionately. "And you'll say 'No' to this offer? I knew you would. Not but the Frenchman is a fine fellow, Gusty. I didn't believe it was in his nation to behave as nobly; for, mark you, I have no doubts, no misgivings about his motives. I'd say all was honest and above board in his offer."

"I join you in that opinion, Jack; and one of these days I hope to tell him so."

"That's the way to fight the battle of life," cried the sailor, enthusiastically. "Stand by your guns manfully, and, if you're beaten, haul down your flag in all honour to the fellow who has been able to thrash you. The more you respect *him*, the higher you esteem yourself. Get rid of that old lawyer as soon as you can, Gusty; he's not a pleasant fellow, and we all want Cutty back again."

"Sedley will only be too glad to escape; he's not in love with our barbarism."

"I'm to breakfast with Cutty this morning. I was nigh forgetting it. I hope I may tell him that his term of banishment is nearly over."

"I imagine Sedley will not remain beyond to-morrow."

"That will be grand news for Cutty, for he can't bear solitude. He says himself he'd rather be in the Marshalsea with plenty of companions, than be a king and have no associates. By the way, am I at liberty to tell him about this offer of Pracontal's? He knows the whole history, and the man too."

"Tell him if you like. The Frenchman is a favourite with him, and this will be another reason for thinking well of him."

"That's the way to live, Gusty. Keep the ship's company in good humour, and the voyage will be all the happier."

After a few words they parted, Augustus to prepare a formal reply to his lawyer, and Jack to keep his engagement with Cutbill. Though it was something of a long walk, Jack never felt it so; his mind was full of pleasant thoughts of the future. To feel that Julia loved him, and to know that a life of personal effort and enterprise was before him, were thoughts of overwhelming delight. He was now to show himself worthy of her love, and he would do this. With what resolution he would address himself to the stern work of life! It was not enough to say affluence had not spoiled him, he ought to be able to prove that the gentleman element was a source of energy and perseverance which no reverses could discourage. Julia was a girl to value this. She herself had learned how to meet a fallen condition, and had sacrificed nothing that graced or adorned her nature in the struggle. Nay, she was more loveable now than he had ever known her. Was it not downright luck that had taught them both to bear an altered lot before the trial of their married life began? It was thus he reasoned as he went, canvassing his condition in every way, and contented with it in all.

"What good news have you got this morning?" cried Cutbill as he entered. "I never saw you look so jolly in my life."

"Well, I did find half-a-crown in the pocket of an old letter-case this morning; but it's the only piece of unexpected luck that has befallen me."

"Is the lawyer gone?"

"No."

"Nor thinking of going?"

"I won't say that. I suspect he'll not make a long halt after he has a talk with Gusty to-day."

And now Jack told in few words the object of Sedley's coming, what Pracontal had offered, and what Augustus had resolved to send for answer.

"I'd have said the Frenchman was the biggest fool in Europe if I hadn't heard of your brother," said Cutbill, puffing out a long column of smoke, and giving a deep sigh.

"That's not exactly how I read each of them," said Jack, sternly.

"Possibly; but it's the true rendering after all. Consider for one moment——"

"Not for half a moment, Master Cutbill. That my brother might make a very good bargain, by simply bartering such an insignificant thing as his honour as a gentleman, is easy to see; and that scores of people wouldn't understand that such a compromise was in question, or was of much consequence, even if it were, is also easy to see; and we need waste no time in discussing this. I say Gusty's right, and I maintain it; and if you like to hold a different opinion, do so in heaven's name, but don't disparage motives simply because you can't feel them."

"Are you better after all that?" said Cutbill, drily, as he filled Jack's glass with water, and pushed it towards him. "Do you feel refreshed?"

"Much better—considerably relieved."

"Could I offer you anything cooling or calming?"

"Nothing half as cool as yourself, Cutty. And now let's change the subject, for it's one I'll not stand any chaff about."

"Am I safe in recommending you that grilled chicken, or is it indiscreet in me to say you'll find those sardines good?"

Jack helped himself, and ate on without a word. At last, he lifted his head, and, looking around him, said, "You've very nice quarters here, Cutbill."

"As neat as paint. I was thinking this morning whether I'd not ask your brother to rent me this little place. I feel quite romantic since I've come up here, with the nightingales, and the cicálas, and the rest of them."

"If there were only a few more rooms like this, I'd dispute the tenancy with you."

"There's a sea-view for you," said he, throwing wide the jealousies. "The whole Bocca di Cattaro and the islands in the distance. Naples is nothing to it! And when you have feasted your eye with worldly beauty, and want a touch of celestial beatitude, you've only to do this." And he arose, and walking over to one side of the room, drew back a small curtain of green silk, disclosing behind it an ornamental screen or "grille" of iron-work.

"What does that mean?" asked Jack.

"That means that the occupant of this room, when devoutly disposed, could be able to hear mass without the trouble of going for it. This little grating here looks into the chapel; and there are evidences about that members of the family who lived at the villa were accustomed to come up here at times to pass days of solitude, and perhaps penance, which, after all, judging from the indulgent character of this little provision here, were probably not over severe."

"Nelly has told me of this chapel. Can we see it?"

"No; it's locked and barred like a gaol. I've tried to peep in through this grating; but it's too dark to see anything."

"But this grating is on a hinge," said Jack. "Don't you see, it was meant to open, though it appears not to have done so for some years back? Here's the secret of it." And pressing a small knob in the wall, the framework became at once moveable, and opened like a window.

"I hope it's not sacrilege, but I mean to go in," said Jack, who, mounting on a chair, with a sailor's agility insinuated himself through the aperture, and invited Cutbill to follow.

"No, no; I wasn't brought up a rope-dancer," said he, gruffly. "If you can't manage to open the door for me——"

"But it's what I can. I can push back every bolt. Come round now, and I'll admit you."

By the time Cutbill had reached the entrance, Jack had succeeded in opening the massive doors; and as he flung them wide, a flood of light poured into the little crypt, with its splendid altar and its silver lamps; its floor of tessellated marble, and its ceiling a mass of gilded tracery almost too bright to look on: but it was not at the glittering splendour of gold or gems that they now stood enraptured. It was in speechless wonderment of the picture that formed the altar-piece, which was a Madonna,—a perfect copy, in every lineament and line, of the Flora at Castello. Save that an expression of ecstatic rapture had replaced the look of joyous delight, they were the same, and unquestionably were derived from the same original.

"Do you know that?" cried Cutbill.

"Know it! Why, it's our own fresco at Castello."

"And by the same hand, too," cried Cutbill. "Here are the initials in the corner—G. L. ! Of all the strange things that I have ever met in life, this is the strangest!" And he leaned on the railing of the altar, and gazed on the picture with intense interest.

"I can make nothing of it," muttered Jack.

"And yet there's a great story in it," said Cutbill, in a low, serious tone. "That picture was a portrait—a portrait of the painter's daughter; and that painter's daughter was the wife of your grandfather, Montagu Bramleigh; and it is her grandchild now, the man called Pracontal, who claims your estates."

"How do you pretend to know all this?"

"I know it chapter and verse. I have gone over the whole history with that old painter's journal before me. I have seen several studies of that girl's face,—*"Enrichetta Lami,"* she was called,—and I have read the entry of her marriage with your grandfather in the parish register. A terrible fact for your poor brother, for it clenches his ruin. Was there ever as singular a chance in life as the re-appearance of this face here?"

"Coming as though to taunt us with our downfall; though certainly that lovely brow and those tearful eyes have no scorn in them. She must have been a great beauty."

"Pracontal raves of her beauty, and says that none of these pictures

do her justice, except one at Urbino. At least he gathers this from the journal, which he swears by as if it were gospel."

"I'd call her handsomer in that picture than in our fresco. I wonder if this were painted earlier or later."

"I can answer that question; for the old sacristan who came up here yesterday, and fell to talking about the chapel, mentioned how the painter—a gran' maestro he called him—bargained to be buried at the foot of the altar, and the Marchese had not kept his word, not liking to break up the marble pavement, and had him interred outside the walls, with the prior's grave and a monk at either side of him. His brushes and colours, and his tools for fresco-work, were all buried in the chapel, for they had been blessed by the Pope's Nuncio, after the completion of the basilica at Udine. Haven't I remembered my story well, and the old fellow didn't tell it above nine times over? This was old Lami's last work, and here his last resting-place."

"What is it seems so familiar to me in that name? Every time you have uttered it I am ready to say I have heard of it before."

"What so likely, from Augustus or your sister."

"No. I can answer for it that neither of them ever spoke of him to me. I know it was not from *them* I heard it."

"But how tell the story of this suit without naming him?"

"They never did tell me the story of the suit, beyond the fact that my grandfather had been married privately in early life, and left a son whom he had not seen nor recognized, but took every means to disavow and disown. Wait now, a moment; my mind is coming to it. I think I have the clue to this old fellow's name. I must go back to the villa, however, to be certain."

"Not a word of our discovery here to any one," cried Cutbill. "We must arrange to bring them all here, and let them be surprised as we were."

"I'll be back with you within an hour," said Jack. "My head is full of this, and I'll tell you why when I return."

And they parted.

Before Cutbill could believe it possible, Jack, flushed and heated, re-entered the room. He had run at top speed, found what he sought for, and came back in intense eagerness to declare the result.

"You've lost no time, Jack; nor have I either. I took up the flags under the altar-steps, and came upon this oak box. I suppose it was sacrilege, but I carried it off here to examine at our leisure."

"Look here," cried Jack, "look at this scrap of paper. It was given to me at the galleys at Ischia by the fellow I was chained to. Read these names, Giacomo Lami—whose daughter was Enrichetta—I was to trace him out, and communicate, if I could, with this other man, Tonino Baldassare or Pracontal—he was called by both names. Bolton of Naples could trace him."

A long low whistle was Cutbill's only reply as he took the paper, and studied it long and attentively.

"Why, this is the whole story," cried he at last. "This old galley-slave is the real claimant, and Pracontal has no right, while Niccolo, or whatever his name be, lives. This may turn out glorious news for your brother, but I'm not lawyer enough to say whether it may not be the Crown that will benefit, if his estates be confiscated for felony."

"I don't think that this was the sort of service Old Nick asked me to render him when we parted," said Jack, drily.

"Probably not. He only asked you to help his son to take away your brother's estate."

"Old Nick knew nothing about whose brother I was. He trusted me to do him a service, and I told him I would."

Though Cutbill paid but little attention to him, Jack talked on for some time of his old comrade, recounting the strange traits of his nature, and remembering with gratitude such little kindness as it was in his power to show.

"I'd have gone clean out of my mind but for him," said he at last.

"And we have all believed that this fellow was lost at sea," muttered Cutbill. "Bolton gave up all his papers and the remnant of his property to his son in that belief."

"Nor does he wish to be thought living now. He charged me to give no clue to him. He even said I was to speak of him as one I had met at Monte Video years ago."

"These are things for a 'cutter head than yours or mine, Jack," said Cutbill, with a cunning look. "We're not the men to see our way through this tangle. Go and show that scrap of paper to Sedley, and take this box with you. Tell him how you came by each. That old fox will soon see whether they confirm the case against your brother or disclose a flaw in it."

"And is that the way I'm to keep my word to Old Nick?" said Jack, doggedly.

"I don't suppose you ever bound yourself to injure your own flesh and blood by a blank promise. I don't believe there's a family in Europe with as many scruples, and as little sense how to deal with them."

"Civil that, certainly."

"Not a bit civil, only true; but let us not squabble. Go and tell Sedley what we have chanced upon. These men have a way of looking at the commonest events—and this is no common event—that you nor I have never dreamed of. If Pracontal's father be alive, Pracontal cannot be the claimant to your estates; that much, I take it, is certain. At all events Sedley's the man to answer this."

Half pushing Jack out of the room while he deposited the box in his hands, Cutbill at last sent him off, not very willingly indeed, or concurringly, but like one who, in spite of himself, saw he was obliged to take a particular course, and travel a road without the slightest suspicion of where it led to.

CHAPTER LXV.

THE LIGHT STRONGER.

"SEDLEY asks for the best Italian scholar amongst us," said Augustus the next morning at breakfast, "and the voice of public opinion calls upon you, Julia."

"You know what Figaro said of 'common report.' I'll not repeat it," said she, laughing, "and I'll even behave as if I didn't believe it. And now what is wanted of me, or my Italian scholarship?"

"The matter is thus: Sedley has received some papers"—here a look of intelligence passed between Augustus and Jack—"which he imagines may be of consequence, but being in Italian, he can't read them. He needs a translator——"

"I am equal to that," broke she in, "but why don't we do it in committee, as you political people call it? Five heads are better than one."

"Mr. Sedley is absolute, and will have but one."

"And am I to be closeted for a whole morning with Mr. Sedley? I declare it seems compromising. Jack frowns at me. There is nothing so prudish as a sailor. I wish any one would tell me why it is so."

"Well, the matter is as you have stated it," said Augustus. "Mr. Sedley says, 'Let me have the aid of some one who will not grudge me two hours, mayhap three.'"

"What if the documents should turn out love-letters?"

"Julia! Julia!" cried Jack reprovingly, for in reality her sallies kept him in constant anxiety.

"I can't help it, Jack; I must be prudent, even if I shock you by my precautions. I repeat, if these be love-letters?"

"Well, I can answer so far," said Augustus. "They are not—at least I can almost assert they are not."

"I wish Nelly would go," said Julia, with mock seriousness. "I see Jack is wretched about it, and after all Mr. Sedley, though not exactly a young man,——"

"I declare this is too bad," said Jack, rising angrily from table, and then throwing himself back in his chair, as if in conflict with his own temper.

"She is provoking, there is no doubt of it, and on board ship we'd not stand that sort of thing five minutes," said Julia, with a demure air, "but on land, and amongst terrestrial creatures, Master Jack, I know nothing for it but patience."

"Patience!" muttered he, with an expression that made them all burst out laughing.

"So I may tell Sedley you will aid him?" asked Bramleigh.

"I'm ready now. Indeed, the sooner begun the better, for we have a long walk project—haven't we, Jack?—for this afternoon."

"Yes, if we have patience for it," said he. And once more the laugh broke forth as they arose from table and separated into little knots and groups through the room.

"I may tell you, Julia," said Augustus, in a half whisper, "that though I have given up hoping this many a day, it is just possible there may be something in these papers of moment to me, and I know I have only to say as much to secure your interest in them."

"I believe you can rely upon that," said she; and within less than five minutes afterwards she was seated at the table with Mr. Sedley in the study, an oblong box of oak clasped with brass in front of them, and a variety of papers lying scattered about.

"Have you got good eyes, Miss L'Estrange?" said Sedley, as he raised his spectacles, and turned a peering glance towards her.

"Good eyes?" repeated she, in some astonishment.

"Yes; I don't mean pretty eyes, or expressive eyes. I mean, have you keen sight?"

"I think I have."

"That's what I need from you at this moment; here are some papers with erasures and re-writings, and corrections in many places, and it will take all your acuteness to distinguish between the several contexts. Aided by a little knowledge of Latin, I have myself discovered some passages of considerable interest. I was half the night over them; but with your help, I count on accomplishing more in half an hour."

While he spoke, he continued to arrange papers in little packets before him, and, last of all, took from the box a painter's pallet and several brushes, along with two or three of those quaintly shaped knives men use in fresco-painting.

"Have you ever heard of the painter Giacomo Lami?" asked he.

"Of course I have. I know the whole story in which he figures. Mr. Bramleigh has told it to me."

"These are his tools. With these he accomplished those great works which have made him famous among modern artists, and by his will—at least I have spelled out so much—they were buried along with him."

"And where was he buried?"

"Here! here in Cattaro; his last work was the altar-piece of the little chapel of the villa."

"Was there ever so strange a coincidence!"

"The world is full of them, for it is a very small world after all. This old man, driven from place to place by police persecutions—for he had been a great conspirator in early life, and never got rid of the taste for it—came here as a sort of refuge, and painted the frescoes of the chapel at the price of being buried at the foot of the altar, which was denied him afterwards; for they only buried there this box, with his painting utensils and his few papers. It is to these papers I wish now to direct your attention, if good luck will have it that some of them may be of use. As for me, I can do little more than guess at the contents of most of them."

"Now these," continued he, "seem to me bills and accounts; are they such?"

"Yes, these are notes of expenses incurred in travelling; and he would seem to have been always on the road. Here is a curious note: 'Nuremberg: I like this old town much; its staid propriety and quietness suit me. I feel that I could work here; work at something greater and better than these daily efforts for mere bread; but why after all should I do more? I have none now to live for—none to work for! Enrichetta, and her boy, gone! and Carlotta——'"

"Wait a moment," said the lawyer, laying his hand on hers. "Enrichetta was the wife of Montagu Bramleigh, and this boy their son."

"Yes, and subsequently the father of Pracontal."

"And how so, if he died in boyhood?" muttered he; "read on."

"Now, Carlotta has deserted me! and for whom? For the man who betrayed me! for that Niccolo Baldassare who denounced five of us at Verona, and whose fault it is not that I have not died by the hangman."

"This is very important; a light is breaking on me through this cloud, too, that gives me hope."

"I see what you mean. You think that probably——"

"No matter what I think, search on through the papers; what is this? here is a drawing. Is it a mausoleum?"

"Yes; and the memorandum says: 'If I ever be rich enough, I shall place this over Enrichetta's remains at Louvain, and have her boy's body laid beside her. Poor child, that, if spared, might have inherited a princely state and fortune, he lies now in the pauper burial-ground at St. Michel. They let me, in consideration of what I had done in repairing their frescoes, place a wooden cross over him. I cut the inscription with my own hands—G. L. B., aged four years; the last hope of a shattered heart.'"

"Does not this strengthen your impression?" asked Julia, turning and confronting him.

"Aged four years; he was born, I think, in '99—the year after the rebellion in Ireland; this brings us nigh the date of his death. One moment. Let me note this." He hurriedly scratched off a few lines. "St. Michel; where is St. Michel? It may be a church in some town."

"Or it may be that village in Savoy, at the foot of the Alps."

"True! We shall try there."

"These are without interest; they are notes of sums paid on the road, or received for his labour. All were evidently leaves of a book and torn out."

"What is this about Carlotta here?"

"Ah, yes. 'With this I send her all I had saved and put by. I knew he would ill-treat her; but to take her boy from her—her one joy and comfort in life—and to send him away she knows not whither, his very name changed, is more than I believed possible. She says that Niccolo has been to England, and found means to obtain money from M. B.'"

"Montagu Bramleigh," muttered Sedley; but she read on:—" 'This is too base; but it explains why he stole all the letters in poor Enrichetta's box, and the papers that told of her marriage.' "

"Are we on the track now?" cried the old lawyer, triumphantly. "This Baldassare was the father of the claimant, clearly enough. Enrichetta's child died, and the sister's husband substituted himself in his place."

"But this Niccolo who married Carlotta," said Julia, "must have been many years older than Enrichetta's son would have been had he lived."

"Who was to detect that? Don't you see that he never made personal application to the Bramleighs. He only addressed them by letter, which, knowing all Enrichetta's story, he could do without risk or danger. Kelson couldn't have been aware of this," muttered he; "but he had some misgivings—what were they?"

While the lawyer sat in deep thought, his face buried in his hands, Julia hurriedly turned over the papers. There were constant references to Carlotta's boy, whom the old man seemed to have loved tenderly; and different jottings showed how he had kept his birthday, which fell on the 4th of August. He was born at Zurich, where Baldassare worked as a watchmaker, his trade being, however, a mere mask to conceal his real occupation, that of conspirator.

"No," said Sedley, raising his head at last, "Kelson knew nothing of it. I'm certain he did not. It was a cleverly planned scheme throughout; and all the more so by suffering a whole generation to lapse before litigating the claim."

"But what is this here?" cried Julia, eagerly. "It is only a fragment, but listen to it:—'There is no longer a doubt about it. Baldassare's first wife—a certain Marie de Pracontal—is alive, and living with her parents at Aix, in Savoy. Four of the committee have denounced him, and his fate is certain.'

"I had begun a letter to Bramleigh, to expose the fraud this scoundrel would pass upon him; but why should I spare him who killed my child?"

"First of all," said Sedley, reading from his notes, "we have the place and date of Enrichetta's death; secondly, the burial-place of Godfrey Lami Bramleigh set down as St. Michel, perhaps in Savoy. We have then the fact of the stolen papers, the copies of registries, and other documents. The marriage of Carlotta is not specified, but it is clearly evident, and we can even fix the time; and, last of all, we have this second wife, whose name, Pracontal, was always borne by the present claimant."

"And are you of opinion that this same Pracontal was a party to the fraud?" asked Julia.

"I am not certain," muttered he. "It is not too clear; the point is doubtful."

"But what have we here? It is a letter, with a post-mark on it." She read, "Leghorn, February 8, 1812." It was addressed to the Illustrissimo Maestro Lami, Porta Rossa, Florence, and signed N. Baldassare. It was but a few lines, and ran thus:—

"Seeing that Carlotta and her child now sleep at Pisa, why deny me your interest for my boy Anatole? You know well to what he might succeed, and how. Be unforgiving to me if you will. I have borne as hard things even as your hatred, but the child that has never wronged you deserves no part of this hate. I want but little from you: some dates, a few names—that I know you remember,—and last of all, my mind refreshed on a few events which I have heard you talk of again and again. Nor is it for me that you will do this, for I leave Europe within a week,—I shall return to it no more. Answer this Yes or No, at once, as I am about to quit this place. You know me well enough to know that I never threaten though I sometimes counsel, and my counsel now is, consent to the demand of—N. BALDASSARE."

Underneath was written in Lami's hand,—“I will carry this to my grave, that I may curse him who wrote it here and hereafter.”

"Now the story stands out complete," said Julia, "and this Pracontal belonged to neither Bramleigh nor Lami."

"Make me a literal translation of that letter," said Sedley. "It is of more moment than almost all we have yet read. I do not mean now, Miss Julia," said he, seeing she had already commenced to write; "for we have these fragments still to look over."

While the lawyer occupied himself with drawing up a memorandum for his own guidance, Julia, by his directions, went carefully over the remaining papers: few were of any interest, but these she docketed accurately, and with such brevity and clearness combined, that Sedley, little given to compliments, could not but praise her skill. It was not till the day began to decline that their labours drew to a close. It was a day of intense attention and great work, but only when it was over did she feel the exhaustion of overwrought powers.

"You are very, very tired," said Sedley. "It was too thoughtless of me; I ought to have remembered how unused you must be to fatigue like this."

"But I couldn't have left it, the interest was intense, and nothing would have persuaded me to leave the case without seeing how it ended."

"It will be necessary to authenticate these," said he, laying his hand on the papers, "and then we must show how we came by them."

"Jack can tell you this," said she; and now her strength failed her outright, and she lay back, overcome, and almost fainting. Sedley hurriedly rang for help, but before any one arrived Julia rallied, and with a faint smile said, "Don't make a fuss about me. You have what is really important to occupy you. I will go and lie down till evening;" and so she left him.

Thoughtfulness in Dress.

It is no doubt easier to find fault than to suggest remedies, and the two processes are generally about equally unpleasant to the person for whose benefit they are intended; but for the sake of variety it is as well to employ them alternately. As we have lately heard so much about the faults of women's dress, I may perhaps be allowed to offer some practical suggestions as to the principles upon which it ought to be regulated. It will at any rate afford me some consolation to embody in this form the result of many years' anxious struggle with the difficulties of the problem. Those difficulties are greater than can be imagined by any outsider. By outsiders I mean in the first place men, who, whatever their own cares and anxieties in the matter of dress, have at any rate to deal with a far less complicated system than ours; and in the next place all women who by reason of their wealth and beauty are raised above, or through poverty or indifference to personal appearance have sunk below, the ordinary level of careful contrivance. The first of these two classes of women, who have no need to plan their dress with care, will of course never be very large, and may be left out of our consideration altogether; but the second is recruited by many who might by proper measures be reclaimed from it, and who collectively might thus be induced to make a considerable contribution to the beauty of the world. Considering that every human being must dress somehow, and that most people's clothes pass in the course of every day before the eyes of a large number of their fellow-creatures, to almost all of whom they convey, or at least may convey some impression either of pleasure or pain, the sum of the effects produced by dress is by no means unimportant. As things are at present it is hard to say whether we should gain or lose most if it were decreed by Act of Parliament that we should all wear a uniform, or if some discovery were made by which the human race could be clothed with fur or plumage. The effect might be monotonous, but it would at least be inoffensive. It would be something like compounding for the extermination of barrel-organs by the abolition of concerts and choral services, and I think it very doubtful whether a majority might not be obtained in favour of such a compromise. However this may be, there is no doubt much room for improvement in the matter of dress, in respect of beauty, significance, and fitness.

The root of the evil is the want of thought; women no doubt care enough, talk enough, dream enough, and spend enough (both of time and money) about dress, but they do not generally put enough thought into it; and the result appears in the wretchedly meaningless and

inharmonious toilettes which fill our houses and streets. The defect is common to all classes, from the maid-of-all-work, whose imitation of her betters is as unreasoning as that of a monkey, to the lady of fashion who spends hundreds a year in producing a result which suggests nothing but Marshall and Snelgrove's.

The subject ought, I think, to be recognized as a branch, however humble, of women's education. The natural love of dress is too strong to be ignored or extinguished, and might be made not only a part, but an instrument of education, if the principles of reason and fitness upon which it really rests were better ascertained, and a knowledge of them were more generally diffused. It would be easy to suggest plans for the diffusion of such knowledge, but the first requisite is that the fact and the importance of its existence should be recognized. People are too apt to think of dress either as a mere amusement, not worth studying seriously, or else as a mysterious art which cannot be reduced to language.

This last opinion is indeed true with respect to a part, but by no means the most important part, of the subject. With regard to mere beauty, apart from significance or fitness, it is very difficult to lay down any principles in words. Beauty of form, colour, and texture can scarcely be reduced to language, except in so far as it depends upon fitness, and fitness (even when understood as including becomingness, or adaptation to the wearer's personal appearance) is very far from constituting the whole difference between beautiful and ugly dress. Without pretending to offer any opinion upon the vexed metaphysical questions respecting abstract beauty, I may safely say that there is an important element of beauty which is addressed rather to the eye than to the mind, and which can therefore be taught, if at all, only by means of that gradual education of the eye which is involved in the study of good models, whether natural or artificial. In respect of such merely sensuous beauty, it is no doubt true that there is no disputing about tastes. Preferences which cannot be justified by reason can have no more weight than that which public opinion may assign to the taste of the persons experiencing them. It is notorious that public opinion does give considerable weight to individual tastes in proportion to the degree of cultivation which they are known to have received; and that there is a sufficient agreement among such generally acknowledged judges to make their criticisms valuable in influencing the education of other eyes. But any verbal instructions must be confined to questions of harmony (or adaptation of parts to each other) and fitness (or adaptations whether of parts, or the whole of any dress to the conditions under which it is to be worn). A full statement of the principles which ought to be observed in these respects would contain all that part of the art of dress which can be put into words. I will attempt to give a sketch of those leading principles which I should especially wish to see impressed upon the minds of students.

A perfect dress, as it seems to me, would be one in which every part was harmoniously combined so as to produce a whole perfectly

adapted to the wearer's personal appearance, character, and circumstances, due regard being at the same time had to time, place, fashion, convenience, and economy.

On each of these heads I have a few words to say.

First, with regard to the combination of parts. This is one of the great difficulties of dress in all cases where expense is not a matter of indifference. A woman's outdoor attire, for instance, must be considered as consisting of at least three parts,—bonnet or hat, mantle (using the word as a generic term for all outdoor garments), and gown. If these were bought in equal numbers, so as to be bound together in life-long alliances, things would be comparatively easy; but it is not so. Their average longevity is different. That of bonnets is by far the shortest, while the extraordinary variations in the duration of shawls introduce a disturbing element into our calculations in respect of outdoor garments; and in the case of gowns, the question of their probable duration is complicated by the necessity of providing for all sorts of contingencies; so that no one can count upon reserving any one of these articles as the inseparable companion of any other, and the difficulty, therefore, of securing that each of the three parts of the outdoor costume shall bear witness of intentional adaptation to the other two is considerable. Some precautions may be suggested for the prevention of the most glaring inconsistencies. For instance, with respect to colour, there are two ways of lessening the danger: either the wearer may choose some one colour, with which every separate article of dress she buys shall harmonise, or she may decide in which of the three parts of her costume variation of colour shall be allowed, restricting herself in the other two parts sternly to neutral tints. These two plans may be in a measure combined, and after a certain experience has been acquired, a compromise between them is perhaps the best arrangement; but beginners should practise each separately. For instance, the choice of some one fundamental colour with which all the separate articles of dress should more or less severely harmonise, is, for every reason, worth making early in life; and for a time (at any rate until the wardrobe shall have been thoroughly weeded from unmanageable colours) it is wise to allow no departure from this rule. But not only does the eye naturally demand and enjoy more variety than a strict observance of this rule through life would allow, but the rule alone is insufficient to secure the object of perfect harmony even in colour between the parts of a toilette. Colours which harmonise with the same colour do not necessarily harmonise with each other. Besides this, regard must be had to the quantity and situation of each colour. Two colours which, if combined in very unequal proportions, are perfectly harmonious, may even as mere colour be intolerable in equal quantities. Again, the rule that two of these principal divisions of the outdoor costume shall be of neutral tint would, if severely followed, produce an unduly sombre effect, and would afford no further security against the very dangers just described. These rules, as I have said, only aim at

preventing some of the worst catastrophes in mere colour, and leave many other very important questions—that of light and shade among others—quite untouched. Another point in which harmony is to be observed is that of texture. A very common error is to put on a mantle of more delicate or richer texture than is suitable to the gown, as, for instance, lace over woollen stuff; the opposite error is less offensive because it may always be supposed that the mantle is thrown on by way of *bond fide* protection to the gown, and is related to it in some degree as the husk is to the kernel. Discrepancies between the bonnet and mantle are obviously more inexcusable than discrepancies between these and the gown, because the two former are understood to be assumed or laid aside together, whereas the gown may have to be worn for a greater number of hours, and under different circumstances. But this consideration, though it may excuse, cannot alter the want of harmony, which is always a serious defect.

I have but pointed out a few among the multitude of ways in which dress may be discordant. It is needless to give further instances, for in what I shall say about the different objects to which dress should be adapted, I shall be enumerating as many points in which harmony may be observed or violated. Each of these various considerations should influence consistently all the separate parts of a toilette; each one therefore introduces a fresh element of difficulty into the problem. It is obvious that in so complicated a process there are but two ways of securing unflinching consistency: one is an unlimited wardrobe, the other a steady adherence to fixed principles.

I have said that dress should be adapted to the wearer's (1) personal appearance, (2) character, and (3) circumstances.

1. *Personal Appearance*.—On the simple principle that harmony is in itself better than discord, and beauty better than ugliness, I should wish to see every dress adapted, as perfectly as can conveniently be done, to the colouring, the shape, and the size of the wearer. Words are so inadequate to describe colour that it is scarcely possible to lay down any rules about the becomingness of particular colours to particular complexions. Everything depends upon variations of tint too slight to be translated into language. The great thing, therefore, to be impressed upon the students under this head will be that they must choose their colours by the eye, and by that alone, never allowing themselves to act upon any theory without constant reference to it. Mr. Ruskin, in his *Elements of Drawing*, advises his pupils, if any one tells them that two colours are discordant, to take the earliest opportunity of combining them, in the conviction that they will afford a peculiarly lovely result. Without going quite so far as this, I think every artist would agree that some of the most unusual and, so to speak, unrecognized combinations are, in skilful hands, the most beautiful. But then the hands must be really skilful, and it is perhaps more dangerous to recommend than to forbid such combinations. One common notion, however, I must protest against, viz., that two different

tints of the same nominal colour,—for instance, turquoise and French blue,—should never be combined. All the most brilliant effects, not only of nature, but of oriental colouring, are produced by such subtle combinations, or rather gradations of colour; but the more subtle and lovely the more difficult they are to manage, and the more carefully the quantity, as well as the exact quality of each tint, must be chosen. The different effect of the same colours in different materials is very remarkable, and should be carefully pointed out to students. It is perhaps safe to say, as a general rule (but not without exceptions), that delicate colours, (such as lavender, dove colour, sea-green, pale blue, &c.) require fine materials. They not only soon fade and get spoilt in common or rough materials; but even when new such colours are apt to look washy and unsatisfactory in coarse stuffs,—their beauty often depends upon a sort of bloom which is to be seen only in silk or other fine textures. The principal combination of colour will, in some cases, be between the dress on the one hand, and the colouring of the wearer on the other; while in other cases the colouring of the wearer is so neutral or insignificant that the whole interest of the effect, in point of colour, must be obtained by combinations between the different parts of the dress itself. In every case, however, it is important to take care that the dress shall not overpower the wearer, either in colour or in any other respect.

In adapting the dress to the shape and size of the wearer, a certain knowledge of drawing and of the proper proportions of the figure is of course the chief help. There are, however, a few well-ascertained rules which may safely be taught. One, for instance, is that transverse shapes generally tend to lessen height and increase breadth, while longitudinal forms have the opposite effect. Another well-known rule (which I believe is easily explained by a reference to optical science) is the tendency of light colours to increase apparent size, and *vice versa*. People of more than average size should be cautious about wearing white or very light colours for this reason, although it must always be remembered that proportion and colour impress the eye so much more sensibly than mere scale that this rule is a very subordinate one, and only to be applied after those more important subjects have been thoroughly considered. It should, however, be remembered that more than average size necessarily involves a certain degree of conspicuousness, which makes any peculiarity of dress doubly undesirable in such cases. A small person may wear with impunity both colours and shapes which would be inexcusably striking on a large figure. Nothing goes so far to redeem unusual size as complete repose both in form and colour. Much trimming, loose ends and streamers, frills and furbelows, and caprices of all kinds, are apt to become intolerable when magnified, while on a small scale they may please, by a certain fluttering airiness which is in keeping with the impression of a tiny creature. But here also proportion may almost reverse the effect of scale. A short heavy figure may even more imperatively need quietness in dress than one of twice its actual volume which has run up into

slenderness. And this naturally leads me to the second respect in which dress should be adapted to the wearer, namely, character ; which, indeed, is scarcely separable from the form on which it is impressed, and according to which such questions as the last should mainly be decided.

2. *Character.*—It is as hard to draw the line between person and dress as between mind and matter, and there is, perhaps, no form of matter into which, and by which, mind can infuse a more subtle and incalculably radiating influence than it does by and into dress. Dress which is not informed and animated by individual character is to that which truly expresses the mind of the wearer what a dead body is to a living one. This life of dress, individuality, is, perhaps, not quite extinct in any one, being to some extent independent of the will, but all its vigour depends upon the degree in which dress is the result of the real working of the wearer's own mind. It is therefore generally seen in the greatest perfection in the dress of women who are neither very rich nor very poor. Like animal life, it depends for its health upon a due balance of restraint and abundance : wealth overlays it, and poverty cramps it. A woman who has no need to think of the price of her clothes, must have a singularly strong natural tendency to the use of dress as a means of self-expression, if she does not leave a good deal of the arrangement of her toilette to her maid and her dressmaker, merely to save herself trouble ; and the succession of the articles of which her wardrobe is composed is so rapid as to make each one worth much less thought to her than it would be to a woman who expected to spend a longer time within it : and, on the other hand, it is a task beyond ordinary powers to express one's mind fully within the limits of a very narrow purse. On this subject, therefore, great allowances must be made for individual difficulties, and great credit should be given for any clear indication of real inventive power or even of real thought and adaptation. The best advice which can be given to students on this head is that they should never set aside any instinctive preference of their own in regard to particular shapes and colours, unless for a definite assignable reason. As in the choice of wholesome food, inclination is to a person in good health a better guide than any rules of diet, so, in dress, a woman who has a genuine instinctive preference for any particular colour will generally be safe in indulging it in the absence of any distinct reason to the contrary ; and though, no doubt, the free play of individual tastes would at first give rise to a fresh crop of mistakes, yet those very blunders have in them an element of life and progress which is utterly absent in the dull uniformity of merely imitative dress. There is a broad distinction between mistakes prompted by real pleasure in colour, even if uncultivated, and those which are the results of a desire to attract attention, or of mere carelessness ; and we ought to beware lest in our desire to discourage vulgarity we crush the germs of growth by too unrelenting a spirit of criticism. As to the manner of indicating character, that will no doubt be as various as character itself ; but some general correspondences might be pointed out, as, for instance, that between gravity of temperament and

quietness of colouring; and the distinction between the quietness of severity, which, in dress, means cold and hard colours, such as steel grey, black, dark brown, and the quietness of simplicity, represented by the use of primary or very delicate colours—for instance, pure blue, white, or clear soft grey, and the quietness of a balanced and self-controlled character, which seems to me to indicate the fitness of deep full colours, such as violet, deep blue, maroon or crimson. But any colours may be either quiet, or the contrary, according to their quantity and treatment, especially as to trimming. Perhaps the chief point to be observed for obtaining quietness of colouring, is that the trimming should be either of the same colour as the dress, (a difference in shade, great enough to be perceptibly intentional and yet not sufficient to produce an actual contrast, is perhaps the best calculated to give a subdued effect to the whole,) or else in sufficient quantity, and sufficiently mixed ("united," as painters say,) with the colour of the ground, to be almost confounded with it, as is best seen in the case of lace; or else in such a very small quantity as to escape observation, merely producing a sense of finish, and perhaps a slight glow or shade, the cause of which must be sought for to be perceived. But quietness, though it is one of the safest and most inexhaustibly charming characteristics which can belong to dress, is not the only quality which we should wish to see expressed by it. Delicacy, freshness, simplicity, liveliness, elaborateness, sternness, dignity, caprice, cheerfulness, gloom, evenness or variability of temperament—all these and countless other varieties of character and disposition have their appropriate influence on dress—and no toilette is fairly entitled to the praise of individuality which does not distinctly reflect some such quality really characteristic of the wearer.

And here I must give a distinct place to one virtue which at the present time needs to be specially encouraged in dress, namely, truthfulness, which implies an utter contempt for any sort of sham or deceptive imitation whatever. To wear any such things appears to me to be not only in every case to symbolize, but in very many to commit, an act of dishonesty; and whatever may be the practice of a discredibly notorious few, I am sure that the immense though silent majority of English ladies repudiate any such practices with abhorrence—at least in theory. It is of course even more difficult to draw the precise line between truth and falsehood in dress than in language; but there is no need to lay down such precise lines. We all know the difference in ordinary cases, and those who really care to be honest, have not much difficulty in steering clear of the doubtful places. There is but one other virtue against which offences can be actually committed in dress, namely, modesty; and on that subject, also, some means of bringing to bear upon the young and thoughtless the better judgment of older and more cultivated minds might really promote important ends.

8. *Circumstances.*—That dress should be adapted to the circumstances of the wearer is a sufficiently obvious, not to say trite remark, but it is

not only constantly disregarded in practice, but also very insufficiently developed in theory. The wearer's circumstances may be considered under the heads of age, rank, and domestic relations. It is often supposed that care in the choice of dress is appropriate only to the young, or that at most it becomes later in life a painful necessity, and a struggle to lessen as much as possible disfigurements which cannot be repaired. It would lead me too far to attempt to combat this opinion, or even to enumerate the differences in feeling which are implied by a dissent from it. But I may just explain, without attempting to establish, my own view of the way in which the advance of age should affect dress, and modify our attitude with regard to it. At the two ends of life it of course happens, though for different reasons, that dress is a matter in which the wearer is comparatively passive. It is then to a considerable extent the business of other hands; and at both these times, for this, among other reasons, the great things to be aimed at are freshness and simplicity; in childhood the simplicity of innocence, and in old age the simplicity of gravity. But at every age a large part of the impression made upon others by any person depends upon his or her dress; and I do not think that at any age it ought to be a matter of indifference whether that impression is pleasing or otherwise. And it seems to me that the sum of the impressions produced upon the mind through the eye by an aged person, may be as pleasing as that produced upon the mind through the eye by the same person at any other age, although the mere pleasure to the eye itself is no doubt almost always less. This, of course, implies that the balance is redressed by a corresponding increase of beauty of expression in age; and surely this is often the case,—surely there is in some old countenances a spiritual beauty, and an accumulation of interest in the records of past experience written in their lines, which surpasses any beauty which the same countenances can have exhibited earlier in life. It is true that this is the rarest of all kinds of beauty. I may be mistaken in thinking it also the highest; it certainly requires some degree of responsive power in the observer for its appreciation; but to deny its existence would be, I think, to write oneself down blind and insensible. I am, however, in danger of straying from my immediate subject. I have alluded to this beauty only to explain why I should wish to see it reverently attired in garments such as shall harmonize with and not distract the attention from its solemn pathos. To succeed in this is surely worth some thought and care in those on whom the task devolves; and it is the less difficult since mere beauty in the dress itself becomes gradually more and more unimportant, as complete subordination to the spiritual or intellectual interest of the wearer's countenance gradually absorbs all other considerations. Black, white, and grey are the only tints which seem thoroughly appropriate to the very latest period of life; and there cannot be much difficulty in arranging these. Besides this process of simplification, the traditions of the wearer's life can hardly fail to have supplied some characteristic and becoming types; and a slight adherence to these, in disregard of the

progress of fashion, gives at once a graceful touch of quaintness to the costume of an old lady which has a special charm for younger generations.

Perhaps a more discouraging period to deal with is that vaguely called "elderly;" when the obvious beauty of youth has not yet been replaced by the picturesqueness, the cultivated significance, or the pathos of old age. Yet even at this age there is a difference, and an important difference, between a well-dressed and an ill-dressed woman; and the importance of the art of dress may surely quite as reasonably be supposed to vary in a direct, as in an inverse proportion to the difficulty of the problem. That the difficulty of the problem does increase somewhere about the middle period of life, I fully admit. But that very difficulty affords the greatest scope for skill in the choice of those delicate gradations by which a woman may adapt her costume to her years; and the wisdom of such a well-considered and carefully executed adaptation to the facts of the case, instead of any attempt to disguise or ignore them, is evident on the grounds both of morality and policy. If it were only for the sake of the perpetuation of interest which results from the necessity of continual adaptation to a changing position, it would be worth while to recognize the lapse of time; and it is, of course, unnecessary to point out how essential to the moral propriety and dignity of a woman's appearance it is that her dress should be suitable to her age. The general tendency of the alteration of style suitable to middle age is towards elaborateness in trimmings and appointments and richness of materials. Complicated and intricate patterns and trimmings seem to shadow forth the complexity and intricacy which is the distinguishing characteristic of the middle period of life. They also, if well arranged, bear witness to the gradually increasing mastery in the art which has been acquired since the early days, when to plan a simple white dress was enough for the beginner; while, later in life, any such elaborate arrangements would become burdensome or lifeless, and a return to some degree of simplicity naturally accompanies the gradual withdrawal from the multifarious activities of middle life. The richness of material, however, which becomes especially suitable when the first youth is passed, need never be laid aside, and indeed seems, in a sense, especially appropriate to those who are no longer exposed to the wear and tear of the busiest years of existence.

Dress also has to be, in some respects, adapted to the social position of the wearer; and on this subject it is very difficult to lay down any very well-defined rules. For there is no saying beforehand what social position any individual may assign to herself; nor is it easy to say exactly what, in the way of dress, is due to any particular assignable rank; still less how the rival claims of rank and wealth ought to be adjusted. But some general principles may be laid down with confidence. One is, that no every-day costume (*i.e.*, no costume which is not avowedly planned with a view to some special festivity) should be such as to be manifestly unsuitable to any company in which the wearer is liable to find herself. A perfect costume for the wife of a London clergyman, for instance, would

be one in which she might receive a visit from a duchess, or pay one to a washerwoman, without disrespect to either. Black silk and white muslin are the typical representatives of the kind of gowns which can hardly be unsuitable in any company. And the same result is always more or less promoted by a dependence for effect rather upon perfection of finish than upon splendour of design. We ought also to encourage by every means the disposition to mark by one's dress the social position which one actually holds rather than the next above it; impressing upon students how much more real respect is due to (for instance) a servant who dresses consistently like a servant, than to one who succeeds (even if by rare good fortune she does succeed now and then) in looking like a lady; showing how impossible it is that any such attempts to assume the appearance of a class above one's own should be consistently carried out in everything, and how peculiarly unladylike is the inevitable failure. The same lesson is fully as much required higher up in the social scale. It would be better, for instance, for a barrister's wife to dress consistently, if only up to the point which might be pronounced suitable for the wife of an attorney, than that she should oscillate between the costumes suitable to the wives of judges and of barristers' clerks respectively. The important truth is that the thing which really gives an impression of refinement and good-breeding is not the particular *pitch* of dress chosen, but the degree in which that pitch, be it what it may, is sustained by perfect finish and "keeping" in every detail. It is obvious that the higher the style aimed at the more difficult and expensive it will be to carry it out in this sustained manner, and therefore the most really refined women in each class will generally be those who pitch their dress lowest for that class,—they having the highest standard of completeness, and the keenest sense of its necessity.

Under the head of domestic relations come all such questions as those respecting the appropriate distinctions between the dress of young ladies before and after their entrance into society, between that of married and unmarried women, and questions respecting mourning and the use of costumes generally. I think that, as a general rule, the more significant dress can be made the better; and I would therefore encourage every attempt to indicate the circumstances of the wearer by appropriate diversities of style. But any sort of costume depends for all its effect upon common consent. The very essence of a conventional symbol is that people should have agreed to attach a particular meaning to its use; and no degree of natural fitness will replace such conventional significations. The effect of costume depends not upon what it ought to mean, but upon what it does mean. We very much want some machinery for taking the sense of the community upon questions of dress, and for suggesting symbols which might with advantage be generally used to signify particular states and conditions of life.

The subject of mourning is one on which there is much to be said, and plausible reasons may be given for or against the whole system. It seems to me natural and inevitable, and to most people's feeling probably

grateful, that there should be some such shelter from the ordinary cares of dress in times of real sorrow, and the adoption of mourning cannot be such a shelter unless it be so strictly conventional as to give no indication of the actual feelings of any individual wearer. But the form which it takes in England is to the last degree troublesome and unreasonable. The addition of so many inches of crape for every degree of affinity is irritatingly absurd. Apart from this, crape itself is a peculiarly bad material for the purpose, from its expensiveness and its liability to injury from every drop of rain. The too common addition of quantities of jet ornaments, or, still worse, of black flowers and other dismal translations of finery into funereal trappings, is both lugubrious and ill-timed, and nobody can think the result really beautiful. To lay aside one's ornaments is the natural symbol of grief, and a relief when the feeling is real. The French plan of signifying "depth" of mourning by increasing the degree of plainness of the simple black dress, and by the absence of ornaments and trimming, seems to me much the most reasonable and appropriate. The period of wearing mourning is considerably shorter than ours. I believe they never wear crape at all, and I cannot see how any one living or dead is the worse for it. The free use of white in all cases of mourning, however deep, would also be a great gain. In hot weather to condemn mourners to the use of heavy black clothes is a mild form of suttee, and should, in common charity, be abolished. But it is too much to expect that individuals should have the courage to break through such customs as these, and there seems no present prospect of any means being provided for united action in such matters. Many suggestions might be made respecting costumes for particular occasions. I will confine myself to one, which seems to me much needed,—I mean a church-going costume. The old simple idea of going to church in one's "Sunday best" had, no doubt, much to recommend it, and in small country churches where each person is familiar with every one else's wardrobe, and the same bonnet and gown does duty week after week for months together, the "Sunday best" really is a sort of church costume; but in great cities it develops into something very different and much less appropriate. A London congregation comes to church dressed very much as if for a flower-show, and the effect is anything but devotional. Good and bad toilettes are alike distracting. Now that we are so busy about the vestments of the officiating clergy, might we not reform the dress of the worshippers? A long black, white, or grey cloak, descending to the ground and worn with a hood of the same material, would be put on in a moment, and would have a very grave and suitable appearance. It would be easier to collect one's thoughts in a church so filled than in such a scene as we now worship in.

I have said that attention to the three great considerations of personal appearance, character, and circumstances, must be combined with a due regard to time, place, fashion, convenience, and economy. A few words respecting each of these will sum up the rest of what I have to say.

1. *Time*.—There is a vague code, which ought to be better defined, regulating the articles appropriate to morning, afternoon, and evening dress. The morning, of course, should be distinguished by freshness and simplicity, the evening by splendour. It may be almost an unreasonable demand in connection with most ladies, but the sentiment of morning attire appears to me to require that it should, at least in some remote degree, suggest a working dress. For this, as well as for the sake of freshness, as large a proportion as possible of it should consist of what are rather ungrammatically called "washing materials;" and it should at least look as if that part of it were washed every day. In summer, cottons and muslins make it easy to carry this out approximately; in winter, the sentiment must be represented by the collar and sleeves. Some kinds of lace are more or less, and should be stringently, set apart for evening, and some for morning use. But there is room for a good deal more definition in this branch of the subject. One anomaly calls for a passing remark—it is, that the distinction between morning and evening lace is so little regarded in bonnets, probably because they are not considered as meant to be washed. But in their present beautifully simple form what would be prettier or more easily managed than morning bonnets made of muslin and Valenciennes lace, and washed as often as their freshness was in the slightest degree impaired? And how much more ladylike such clean and simple head-dresses would be than the tulle and blonde constructions now too often worn at all hours of the day. The sentiment of evening costume is, I suppose, that it is improvised for the one occasion on which it is worn; and, therefore, no degree of flimsiness or fragility in the materials can offend one's taste, whatever one may think of them in point of economy. The afternoon is a compromise between morning and evening which it is hard to treat philosophically. To dress three times a day seems scarcely worthy of a rational creature, and this is indeed theoretically recognized by the technical use of the word "morning dress" for everything worn before dinner. It would be well if practice were more nearly in accordance with theory in this particular.

The time of year need be noticed only as still further complicating the problem of dress for those who have to think much of expense. It is easy enough to adapt one's clothing to the temperature, if one can afford it. I may mention, however, that some regard is due to other people's eyes as well as one's own feelings, that dress should *look* cool in summer and warm in winter, even if the wearer should be abnormally indifferent to the sensations of heat and cold. Also, when artificial flowers are worn, it is essential that they should be such as are really in season, at least in greenhouses. Under the head of time we have also to consider the question of repetition. It is not only in buying new articles of dress that thought is needed, but in the daily selection of such as shall be worn together, so as to secure enough and not too much variation from day to day. Abrupt changes of the whole costume, or perfectly uniform repetitions of the same

arrangement on successive days, seem to me almost equally undesirable. The most perfect arrangement, I think, is a combination of continuousness with variety by means of alterations of detail, while the foundation remains the same; and when that is changed the transition may be rendered less abrupt by the re-appearance of some familiar ornament, redeeming the new attire from strangeness. Rapid and total changes of dress destroy the web of pleasing associations which time weaves round clothes as well as round other inanimate objects.

2. In the consideration of *place* the distinction between town and country corresponds in some degree to that between morning and evening. In the country there is always a charm in what suggests rural occupations even when it is manifestly only a suggestion. A lady's outdoor dress in the country should always be one in which, if she did milk a cow or make hay, she would be picturesquely and becomingly, even if really unsuitably, dressed for the occasion. Tried by this test, silk and black lace and all sorts of gauzy materials would be condemned, and, I think, rightly, as unsuitable to the country. For the seaside a similar test might be founded upon the possibility of carrying any given costume into a boat. This test would be even more exclusive than the last; and should perhaps be less rigorously applied, though it ought never to be quite lost sight of. Some regard may be had, when it is possible, to the probable surroundings in respect of furniture, &c.; and furniture might be chosen more than is now done with a view to its relations with the dress of its owners; but it is impossible to insist very strictly upon attention to such varying combinations as these.

3. I now come to the vexed and most perplexing question of *fashion*. All theory scouts the dominion of fashion as baseless, while all practice bends to it. To the philosophical mind there is something very irritating in seeing such absolute sway exercised by a power which eludes all inquiry into its source or laws. In more ordinary minds it almost inspires a sort of superstitious awe. Like the Indian chupatties which herald a revolution, it comes nobody knows whence, it spreads nobody knows how, with more than electric rapidity. Those who have made the most energetic attempts to resist its authority know best how certain is their ultimate defeat. I am not going to attempt to reason about this most unreasonable power; only to describe what seems to me to be the right way of regarding it. It is of no use to ignore it; it can hardly be worth any woman's while to resist it; but it need not be allowed to tyrannize everywhere, and it is mere folly for everybody to attempt to keep pace with it. Its proper function seems to me to be like that of rules in a game of skill, to give scope for ingenuity in observing it. Were there no succession of fashions, dress would sink to a mere mechanical repetition of established models. Whether this would be a moral gain or not, it would clearly destroy half the interest of the spectacle. That interest is equally destroyed when mere fashion is allowed to decide everything, as it is in too many instances. You know the fashion, and can, therefore, predict such a one's dress. The real

interest is in watching the variations which may be produced in the dress of a woman who is resolutely harmonious and individual in her own style of dress, by a reference more or less distant to the varying fashions of the day. In such cases the fashion is like an air led by some unknown and invisible performer, but caught up and repeated by a number of instruments, modulated into different keys, and varied into a thousand new creations, while the original air is never lost sight of, nor too widely departed from. Let fashion be thus regarded, and instead of an unmeaning tyranny, it becomes the motive of perpetually renewed interest; and it will, at the same time, become apparent that the very object of consulting the fashion is defeated by too servile an adherence to it on the one hand, or by abortive attempts to follow it on the other. The practical difficulty remains of adjusting the respective limits of fashion and individuality. There are two or three principal considerations by which this adjustment should be influenced. In the first place, the more remote any part of a woman's dress is from her own personality the more completely it may be abandoned to fashion. Thus, the shape and length of a skirt, the choice of a flat trimming which does not alter the outline of the figure, such extraneous adjuncts as muffs, parasols, fans, &c.,—all these things are the mere prey of fashion, and the variations which it may work in them are mostly too remote to disturb the stamp of individuality. But when fashion creeps up to the sleeves, and the cut of the body of a gown, its influence must be more jealously scrutinized—grave individual exigencies may begin to encounter it here; and when it comes to a question of hairdressing, the whole expression of the face being at stake, fashion should be almost the last consideration to be admitted, although, even here, it should never be ignored. Colouring also should always be determined rather by the permanent characteristics of the wearer than by any variations of fashion. Another rule always to be borne in mind is, that personal inclinations rank above fashion. No woman of fine moral sense would wear what she herself felt to be distinctly ugly in mere deference to fashion. Personal inclinations are to fashion what the individual conscience is to public opinion,—much influenced by it, but reacting upon it, and paramount while opposed to it. The eye is so much affected by habit that the sense of ugliness rarely long withstands a very strong current of fashion; and when the sense of ugliness is lost the reason for holding out is gone; but it is almost morally important that as long as it exists it should not be outraged. It can rarely even seem necessary to do so, for there are few fashions which may not be adopted in moderation, and so discreetly adapted to the taste of the wearer as to become fresh sources of beauty. And in the course of its revolutions, fashion every now and then develops really beautiful forms, which it would be well if we could in some way stamp with public approbation, so that they might be saved from the ordinary lot of oblivion.

The last caution which I should wish to impress upon students with regard to fashion is the necessity of taking a sober measurement of the degree in which one really either can or ought to dress fashionably. To

make snatches at occasional fragmentary bits of fashion when one's purse does not allow of the whole wardrobe being kept up consistently to the same degree of novelty, but would amply suffice to keep one neat and fresh in the style of a few weeks or months ago, is simply to throw away the substance for the shadow, and to make one's unavoidable deficiencies doubly glaring. Also, it must be remembered that fashionable dress is as unbecoming in a lady living in a quiet unfashionable society as the attempt to look like a lady is in her housemaid; though it is very likely that she severely condemns the latter error, while she has not strength of mind to refuse her connivance, at least, at her dressmaker's attempts to make her commit the former.

4. In turning to the subject of *convenience*, we emerge from the enchanted grounds where invisible powers exercise their mysterious authority, to the plain light of common sense and reason. That sleeves intended to be worn at meal times should be so constructed as not to dip into dishes; that outdoor gowns should either be short or capable of being shortened; that bodies and skirts, having different periods of existence, and needing to be occasionally packed up, should be separable; that gowns to be put on by human creatures should have their fastenings within reach of the human hand; that hats should be light and shady, parasols for a variable climate large enough to serve as a shelter both from sun and rain; that cloaks should be waterproof, and winter petticoats made of stout coloured stuff instead of white cambric; all these obvious truths have recently dawned upon the minds of this generation, and it is much to be hoped that we shall be able to retain our hold of them. The hope would be more consoling if the records of past fashions did not bear testimony to the extraordinary eclipses which such truths have formerly undergone. In losing sight of them we should lose not only the actual conveniences which they secure to us, but we should be giving up that manifest constructive fitness which, as we all know, is one of the most unfailing guides to the higher kinds of beauty in decorative art. A dress rationally adapted to its purpose would give a certain pleasure to rational creatures even if it were utterly devoid of beauty; but these adaptations are to decorative beauty what trellis-work is to a climbing plant. The ornaments which grow naturally upon them have a charm and a vigour which is unattainable by the pursuit of beauty as a primary object. Beauty, like pleasure, seems to have a mysterious habit of following in the wake of those who are pursuing other objects, while eluding those who turn aside to seek it.

5. All these various considerations—harmony, personal appearance, character, circumstances, time, place, fashion, and convenience,—act upon each other, restricting and promoting and complicating each other in the most incalculable manner, but they are all, like most other human affairs, subject to the last consideration on my list—that of *economy*. All the other ends might be attained by the simple expedient of boundless expenditure; but even were that expedient within the reach of all, there

would be a coarse facility about the use of it which would reduce a noble sport to a mere battue. The whole interest of the pursuit, considered as an art, or at least as a game of skill, would fall to the ground if the contents of all the warehouses of London and Paris were at one's service. Even in that very improbable case there would still be a certain moral value in moderation. But the cases which in any degree approximate to this lie beyond my province. Any sum under 100*l.* a year needs careful management to be made to yield a thoroughly satisfactory crop of clothes. It is perhaps quite as difficult to lay out 100*l.* as 20*l.* a year to the best advantage, though, of course, with the larger sum one is not made to feel the consequences of one's mistakes so long or so grievously. Ordinary mortals, whose pin-money is really limited, be it limits what they may, ought to consider well with themselves in which direction they will economize, and in which they will launch out. Expense may be well bestowed in several distinct, almost opposite, ways. One plan which has its merits is to buy none but the very best—which, unfortunately, are almost invariably the most expensive—materials, on the plea, which we will not handle too roughly, that "they are the most economical in the long run." They are certainly apt to be the most beautiful. The opposite plan of a rapid succession of cheap things has also much to recommend it, (provided the cheap materials be also simple, otherwise cheapness is apt to mean tawdriness,) especially as regards freshness and the facility of keeping pace with the fashion. But this plan would be doubly expensive to any lady who was obliged to have recourse to the services of a dressmaker. Whichever branch of this alternative may be chosen, it is still necessary to consider whether the evening or the morning, the indoor or outdoor costume shall be the first object, for the sake of which the rest of one's wardrobe shall, if necessary, be stinted. This will naturally depend upon one's social habits—that time of day being most carefully provided for when one is most likely to be observed by the friends one most cares to please. I hardly know why it is that there is a certain flavour of propriety and dignity about the earlier hours of the day which makes one feel that a woman who spent her chief care and most of her money on her morning toilettes would occupy a sort of moral pedestal, raised slightly above the level of one whose pride was in her dinner-dresses. And yet even husbands, fathers, and brothers are oftener at leisure to be pleased by dress after the day's work is over than at the breakfast-table, where their attention is at best divided between it and the newspaper. Whatever the full explanation of this sentiment may be, most people certainly feel that the moral respectability of dowdiness is at its minimum in the morning and increases as the day goes on till it reaches its maximum after dinner—while the indulgence accorded by severe moralists to beauty and freshness of adornment runs an opposite course. Perhaps the instinct of self-preservation warns these censors—who after all are themselves human, and have to provide their own or their families' wardrobes—that good taste does not

allow so much money to be spent on morning as on evening toilettes, and that they are therefore a sort of safety-valve for the ineradicable love of dress inherent in the female mind. A still further subdivision may be made by which the reserve forces are directed upon some particular article of either morning or evening dress, all the rest being done as cheaply as may be, as a mere background for the display of some one favourite vanity. One lady will thus concentrate her efforts upon lace, another upon furs, a third will at all hazards indulge her love of rich silk gowns, a fourth will before everything secure dainty and appropriate garnishings. These specialities naturally arise unconsciously from strong individual tastes, but even where there is not such a natural bias it is worth while to consider whether more may not be effected by some degree of concentration than by the equal distribution of one's forces. Whatever path may ultimately be chosen, whether richness of materials, perpetual renewal of freshness, morning neatness or evening splendour, lace, fur, jewels or trimmings, be made the chief aim, it remains true that no ordinary income can suffice to accomplish them all, and that complete success in any one of these branches generally implies severe self-restraint in the others. What I have already said once or twice about the much greater effect of refinement which is produced by perfect finish of execution than by ambitious design, should be especially borne in mind in making this choice. Far better wear no lace at all than be obliged to eke out a set by the addition of pieces of a different character, or than put it upon inappropriate materials. Far better wear a complete set of bog-oak ornaments than an amethyst brooch with emerald bracelets and pearl earrings. Far better wear a linsey-wolsey gown with carefully chosen and corresponding collars, sleeves, petticoat, gloves, &c., than a rich silk with fragmentary and ill-combined appointments. But this perfect finish is about the most expensive quality that can be aimed at in dress; and it also appeals to a more cultivated taste than we can always reckon upon in spectators.

And with a short appeal to spectators I will conclude my remarks. No art can reach its utmost perfection which is not criticised with discriminating interest, and, at the same time, with a fair share of indulgence. In both these elements we too often fail as spectators. Everybody cannot be always at leisure to observe everybody else's dress: but when we do observe it, and comment upon it, we might at least take the trouble to do so intelligently; to consider the aim and the execution; to do justice to either, if either are good; and to forgive shortcomings in the one for the sake of merit in the other. Let any unprejudiced person run over the list of the topics upon which I have touched, remembering that they are but specimens of the considerations which have to be borne in mind in the choice of clothes, and say whether great indulgence be not due to those who have to reconcile them all without running into debt, or spending upon the matter an amount of time and money which any reasonable woman would be ashamed to spend upon dress. Indeed, as I think over

them all, I am inclined to wonder, not at our failures—hideous and frequent though they be—but at the measure of our success. For want of thought, though the most serious and fundamental, is not the only source of failure; too much thought may be almost as dangerous and a good deal more embarrassing; for it may lead to the adoption of a style of dress which is addressed rather to the mind than the eye, and it may meet with criticisms proceeding merely from the eye. Besides, thoughtful people are very apt to get entangled in their own subtleties; or in avoiding Scylla to fall into Charybdis; or to reflect till they become desperate and act like fools; in short, their snares are in proportion to their sensitiveness. What is wanted is the combination of a clear grasp of certain fixed principles, with a knack of execution. And when we remember how rare a combination this is, we shall not be tempted to be too severe upon well-meant, though only partially successful attempts. Anything really pretty and judicious ought to meet with instant and hearty recognition; a sorrowful silence is punishment enough for most failures. My remarks have been offered partly as aids to thought, but are intended, and I hope will be accepted, also as a plea for indulgence.

Pocket Boroughs.

I HOPE no reader of this Magazine will do me the injustice of supposing that in anything I may chance to say of the ancient representative system of this country any slur is intended upon the great constitutional changes which have been effected in the present century. It is possible, in either writing or talking, to put oneself for the moment in an adversary's place, and to look at things from his point of view, without meaning in the slightest degree to adopt his opinions. Nay, more, it is possible to show the inadequacy of the refutations which have been offered to adverse theories by our own friends without implying that such theories either can not, or ought not to, be refuted. In the present article, however, which is not intended to be political, it is possible that I may lay myself open to misconstruction by those who will not bear in mind the force of the above remarks. That I cannot help. Contented with a general assertion that I do *not* want to bring back again Grampound, Gatton, and Old Sarum, I proceed with an easy mind to say what I have to say both about the past history and the present condition of Pocket Boroughs.

There is a kind of poetry about these grass-grown relics just as there is about a Tintern Abbey or a Chepstow Castle. They are monuments of a system which, though we have no desire to restore it, was undeniably a grand one in its day. These mouldering old streets were to the aristocracy of a later period what feudal towers and armed retainers had been to the aristocracy of an earlier. And most men now admit that with all its backslidings and corruptions, the eighteenth century was a splendid part of English history. There is a solid, square-cut, Roman grandeur, if not unmixed with a certain Roman coarseness, about all the doings of that period which is perhaps more exclusively English than the grace, the spirituality, and the enthusiasm of the seventeenth century. These last-mentioned qualities are seen in connection with events which formed part of the history of Europe, while the former were coincident with events peculiar to the history of England. The virtues and vices evoked by the Reformation, by the revival of letters, by the growth of loyalty, the moral substitute for mediæval chivalry, were common to all the nations of the Continent. But the English revolution was unique. No other nation has succeeded in imitating that. And it was only, therefore, reasonable to expect that the national character and national exploits, as manifested under the *régime* which that revolution established, should exhibit colours of their own not previously developed; or not to an equal extent. We may reach the same result from another point of view.

In the fourteenth century England was a member of one great political organization which extended all over Europe, and she naturally bore a strong family likeness to her feudal sisters. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, she was one of a large group of monarchies all fashioned, as it seemed, upon the same principles, and certainly all worked through the medium of the same class of sentiments. But during the intervening period England was pre-eminently insular. In the nineteenth century, again, owing partly to the establishment of representative institutions on the Continent, partly to the reform of our own institutions at home, partly to the press and the steam-engine, England has replaced herself *en rapport* with the political feeling of other countries to an extent unknown since the Stuarts. With the beginning of the eighteenth century she may be said to have parted company from the old European society. She had then, for the first time, a political constitution which, as it sprang from internal causes peculiar to herself, had no counterpart abroad, and at once drew a marked line of demarcation between herself and all the rest of the world.

What it was that the old aristocratic system did for this empire has been so ably and eloquently described by a valued contributor to this Magazine, that I shall venture no more than this passing allusion to it, merely to show that I am not without good liberal authority in speaking of the "grandeur" of that period. And hence it follows that whatever was an integral part of that period, whatever contributed to the support of that stately edifice, or to the authority of those men of might whose wisdom and valour have adorned it, becomes invested with something more than a merely antiquarian interest in the eyes of any man who can look beyond the passing moment. Now it is needless to say that the period which intervened between the Revolution and the Reform Bill was *the period par excellence* of pocket boroughs. They reached their meridian glories early in the reign of George III., and shone with undiminished lustre down to the reign of his degenerate successor. Then came the fatal shock, since which they have been rapidly losing ground every day; till they have fallen, alas! into a now dishonoured old age, and promise ere long to disappear into the limbo whither fines and recoveries, flint and steel guns, old leisure, and mixed punch await their ancient comrades. Not but what, in point of numbers, they still maintain a decent front. But the red line is very thin, and even from this the vital principle has departed. The greatest man in England could not now bequeath his interest in a borough to his heir, as he could do in the good old times. Moreover, it is not with the survivors that my present business lies. They stand at present, each protected by its own prickly fence of political thorns and briars, to keep off the wild boars of Birmingham, Manchester, and Finsbury; and with these I do not care to meddle. But we can examine one or two of those which the beasts of the forest did once succeed in ravaging without either scratching our fingers or losing our temper.

Of the old borough system, then, as a recognized institution of the

country, and as it flourished throughout the aristocratic, distinct both from the feudal and from the monarchical, period of English history, we may consider that the doom is signed. But what *was* that system? What was it really understood to mean by the people themselves? Was it a fraudulent appropriation of popular rights, disguised under popular forms, or was it not? Was the Reform Bill the creation of a new constitution, or merely a return to the old one? I put these questions because upon the right answer to them depends the nature of the interest which we derive from contemplating the ruins of ancient boroughs. Nor need the inquiry involve us in anything like a political discussion. If the change in 1832 was a good one, it really cannot signify one straw by what name men call it. But I believe that the Reformers of that period laid themselves open to very damaging retorts when they professed to think that Schedules A. and B. were only a restoration of the ancient constitution of this country. And, more than that, the argument did no good, for it never convinced their opponents, although these, it is curious to observe, either did not see, or thought it impolitic to avow, the right answer. The real truth was that, in 1832, we wanted, not a restoration, but an extension; not something old, but something new. And what we wanted we got. But it was idle to pretend that we were readjusting our institutions by the model of the thirteenth century, as was pretended by writers and speakers then, and as has not uncommonly been supposed to have been the case since. The explanation of the error is quite simple. Men saw, or thought they saw, that nomination boroughs did not exist in the days of the Plantagenets, and that writs were only issued to populous and important places. And they argued, accordingly, that to transfer the franchise from boroughs which were decayed, corrupt, and servile, to towns which were prosperous and independent, was to restore the ancient constitution. And so it would have been had all the other conditions of the problem remained the same. But they had not. The House of Commons in the reign of George IV. was as different from the House of Commons in the reign of Henry VI. as the barons who extorted Magna Charta from the barons who accepted the Reform Bill. The free electors of the fifteenth century returned men to Parliament whose business was confined to voting money. The obsequious electors of the eighteenth century returned men to Parliament whose business was to govern the empire. Here was the essential difference, which has so constantly been overlooked. "If you want," the Tories might have said, "to restore the ancient constitution, well and good. But, in that case, with the old freedom of election, you must re-impose the old limits upon the functions of the House of Commons." And such a retort would have been logically fatal; for, whether we regard the House of Commons during the feudal period, during the kingly period, or during the modern aristocratic period, we shall look in vain for any time when it united with the freedom of election which is said to have prevailed under the Edwards the political

power which it certainly possessed under the Georges. Step by step, as the powers of that House increased, the influence exercised over it by other forces in the country increased too. As the House of Commons gradually aspired to rule the nation, first the Crown and then the aristocracy resolved to rule the House of Commons. By one means or another power was to be kept in the old hands. When it came to a fight in the seventeenth century between the Crown and the aristocracy, the aristocracy used the House of Commons against the king, and, in the end, succeeded in their object. But that assembly then found itself in the position of the stag in the fable.

Non equitem dorso, non frenum depulit ore.

Still the usurpation we say was, after all, merely nominal. The power which the aristocracy was now enabled to exercise, through the House of Commons, either they or the Crown had always exercised in some way. Neither the House of Commons nor the people had lost anything through the introduction of the nomination system, because they had nothing to lose. The people gained a great deal by the Reform Bill of 1832, from which they had been improperly excluded. But they did not recover anything of which they had previously been robbed. And this distinction, as will be seen hereafter, has a direct bearing not only on the political but also on the social aspect of the old boroughs with which we are at present concerned.

I have, indeed, put the case, so far, rather *too* favourably for the feudal period. It is true that before the battle of Bosworth the elections were left tolerably free, because there was no systematic attempt to interfere with the old principle that taxation and representation should go together; and taxation was the only branch of Government which the Commons affected to control. But even at this early period, according to Mr. Hallam, the Crown was in the habit of creating boroughs, in order to serve a temporary purpose—either to secure a Parliament devoted to its policy for the time, or to gratify powerful personages who possessed interest in the neighbourhood. And it is thus that he accounts for the existence of numerous “ancient boroughs” before the Reform Bill, which could “*at no period* have possessed sufficient importance to deserve the elective franchise on the score of their riches or population.”

Thus we are not to suppose that all those village boroughs which figured in Schedule A. had necessarily been, at some remote period, populous and flourishing towns. Thus, too, we are relieved from a two-fold perplexity, which is sure to seize upon the mind as it contemplates a Brackley, a Bedwyn, or a Chipping Norton—how, namely, they ever *could* have been places of any great consequence, and why, if they ever were so, they should have sunk to what they now are. No extinct industry has receded from their borders, and left them high and dry to rot. Few of them could have been places of any great military importance. Many of them are not even upon the main highways. No, we may depend upon it

that the majority of such small boroughs were always small boroughs, owing their fitness for the franchise either to the favour of some neighbouring potentate, or to their ascertained willingness to return a Court candidate to Parliament. The system which was abolished one generation back was substantially the same system that flourished five centuries ago. The wheels and the wires were pretty much what they always had been. It was the machine itself that had grown obsolete. And the effect of this conviction is to invest, with quite a new kind of interest, the grey hairs of Grampound and Higham Ferrers.

After the accession of the Tudors, when the Crown and the Commons both acquired new powers from the destruction of the old nobility, the influence of the Crown became, if not more general, at least more conspicuous and decisive. When a new Parliament was to be summoned writs were issued or withheld according to the known tendencies of the inhabitants; and in the reign of Charles I. it became necessary for the "country party," as they were called, to offer a vigorous resistance to this practice, which must have ended in making the House of Commons purely the creature of the sovereign, as it afterwards became of the aristocracy. One of the earliest achievements of Hampden was to procure the restitution of the franchise to the town of Wendover and some others, to which the Government had omitted to direct writs, because of their known antagonism to the Court. In the third period, *i.e.*, after the Revolution, the history of our representative system is well known. And I need not pursue this branch of our inquiry any further. The only reason why I have pursued it so far as this is that my readers might be in a condition to sympathize while I muse amid the ruins of Carthage. Gazing upon some of the by no means even large villages, which forty years ago returned two members to Parliament, and were then, we have been assured, even less populous than they are now, one is driven to ask oneself whether it was possible that the English people could have been gulled by any such transparent imposture as that which dignified the process of election at these places with the title of popular representation? My own belief is they never were. My firm conviction is that the system in question was generally understood to be what it really was—a rather clumsy and demoralizing, but nevertheless practical, mode of giving effect to aristocratic government. There was tall talk upon the subject, no doubt, chiefly among orators who, being excluded from office, took it out in tall talk. But really it is too childish to suppose that any of the great statesmen, Whig or Tory, of the eighteenth century, from Bolingbroke to Charles Fox, really believed one word of what they said about the ultimate tribunal of the people.

I am now in a position to invite the reader's attention to one or two of those venerable and picturesque villages which in former days were the pride of a profligate aristocracy; but which now, like cast-off mistresses reduced to indigence, have taken to small shops and public-houses, and eke out a precarious subsistence by the sale of beer or lollipops. A

certain prince that we all know of desires the swallow to tell his lady love that—

Fair and false and fickle is the south,
But dark and true and tender is the north.

This remarkable observation, however, is not applicable to the political division of England. The "tender and true" in politics has certainly been found rather in the south than in the north of this island. There was the stronghold of the cavalier, and there linger still the last traces of the "old regime," among the brave old boroughs of Wiltshire. Shorn of their strength is this gallant regiment now. Here and there a soldier of the old guard still bears himself bravely as one who did not know that the hand of progress was upon him; and in close boroughs, if anywhere, *noblesse oblige* in several senses of the word, and we doubt not they will die hard. Our business, however, as we have already stated, is not with the living, but with the dead. The south and west of England is the great district for these interesting remains, as it is for the remains of Druidism. And it is here that I have seen those which struck my fancy most. In the north-west corner of one of those sequestered shires, in which ancient manners and modes of thought still to some extent survive, which has only recently been pierced by a railway, and where the roads between the villages are still in bad weather impassable, at a distance of about twenty miles apart, repose two of these fallen angels, whose present squalor contrasts most distressingly with the guilty splendour of the past. Not that they were ever, as far as I could make out, more extensive, or even *much* more populous than they are at present. But once they were, so to speak, clad in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously, if not every day, a good number of days in the year. They boasted the dignity of mayors and corporations, they had civic revels in their houses, and barrels of ale in all their streets. They had large and prosperous inns, where their courtly representatives, real gentlemen generally, and none of your plaster and stucco, actually dined, drank, and toasted no doubt the immortal British Constitution; and what are they now?—clay, a little clay. The feasts are over; the ale is drunk out; the halo which surrounded the mayor, and the members, and the processions, and the four white horses, is extinct; and a few rows of mud cottages, and here and there a tawdry public-house alone survive to tell us what Pocket Boroughs once were.

The two that I am now thinking of are, nevertheless, very unlike each other. One is, indeed, the very picture of desolation; and I strongly recommend it to any one who wants to see an old pocket borough in perfection. As you enter it at one end you pass along a row of ruinous ragged-looking houses, without either roofs or windows, terminating in a few squeezed-up mud hovels which appear to be inhabited. Turning to the right into the main street of the borough, you find a wide straggling road, with a large pond on one side of it, two or three rusty-looking shops, a farm-house, one genteel cottage, a dead-wall, a stone cross, and two

immense inns, looking as if they could have accommodated easily all the gentlefolks of the county, and their servants and carriages to boot. It was these inns which afflicted me with the deepest melancholy. There they stood, slipshod, shabby, and frowsy, without a shred of self-respect left, like some boozy spendthrift, far along the road to grief, whom you remember but a brief time back florid, lavish, hospitable. If you go in to eat and drink, you will probably come out to rail; and it will be better, therefore, to confine yourself to somewhat less material entertainment. I myself was wroth for a moment as the doors of the "Talbot Hotel" creaked sulkily behind me; but on brief reflection I confessed the unreasonableness of my anger. Had I not entered to do homage to the *genius loci*; to sit where great wits had sat; and to repeople the old rooms, and the street in front of the windows, with all the humours of Hogarth; nay, more than this, to philosophize on political institutions, and to chew the cud of the romances which such scenes invariably suggest to one? And had I not carried away with me something far better than beer; something which mine hostess knew not how to charge for, or doubtless she would have put it in the bill? By getting wet through, I had gained an opportunity of inspecting the state bed-chambers. Here was magnificence, clearly testifying to the past glories of this now degraded tavern: large rooms, huge four-posters, good fire-places, and walls hung with prints of by no means a contemptible character. Here, thought I, we tread more closely on the past than we have yet trodden. Here, doubtless, under these very coverlets, has lain many a goodly gentleman,—true toper and pious Tory, who poured not libations to his gods of that which cost him nothing. Here have been carried in due form proposers and seconders, and most likely principals as well; to sleep two or three in a bed the sleep of the just; and to wake next morning with red eyes beneath their rumpled wigs, and bellow to the drowsy servitors for small-beer and a barber. Here, in this room, must have been heard full often that wit which was the delight of St. James's, and those diseased ravings which had nearly given London to the flames. And here, too, the famous old general of Queen Anne may have fought his battles over again, and snorted out curses on the hero who had tried to rob him of his glory. "All these, and more, came flocking" as I contemplated the roomy couches and the spacious chambers of our inn, and this was the picture which I carried away in the mind's eye, and held to be more than an equivalent for very indifferent accommodation.

In spite of all unpleasant incidents and depressing external phenomena, my predominating sensation was one of reverence. In every ill-clad, grey-haired labourer that passed me, imagination saw a possible "pot-whalloper," as, sixty years ago, in every threadbare foreigner in the Strand you might have pushed against a French marquis. The associations of the place triumphed over its existing aspect. And by the time I got to the further end of the long wide straggling street I was quite in a mood to do homage to the two lions which there seemed to bow one out of the village.

One was the ruin of an old castle which had known, in succession, the Mandevilles, the Cliffords, and the Nevills, the other was a fragment of wall which had formed part of the library of George Selwyn. Of the castle but a few grass-grown blocks of stones are still left. But they lie pleasantly among some old trees, just on the outskirts of the town, and between them and the main street which it fronts at right angles stood the house of the famous old wit to whom one-half of the borough once belonged. The site of it is now bare, but the situation of the library is still pointed out to the curious, from the windows of which the owner could command an uninterrupted view of his property, and observe the humours of his constituents. There can hardly be a better illustration of the history of our small boroughs, which we have already sketched, than this immediate proximity of the residence of the borough proprietor to the castle of the feudal lord: and now both in ruins. The various phases through which such boroughs have passed are here perfectly represented. Selwyn found the use of his; for in the general election of 1780 he was defeated at Gloucester, which he had represented in several Parliaments, and was fain to take refuge in one of those asylums for genius which the constitution then so liberally provided. He died in 1791, and by his will left all his property to his nephew, Lord Sydney, and with it his interest in one-half of the borough of Ludgershall.

The other half of the borough belonged at one time to General Webb, the hero of Blenheim, who figures so conspicuously in *Esmond*. He lived at Biddesden House, about two miles from the town, and this property, together with the borough interest, was purchased from his descendants, near the close of the last century, by the Everett family, who still possess the estate. General Webb occupied the seat himself in several Parliaments; and among the nominees of his successors was the famous Lord George Gordon, who was Selwyn's colleague.

Ludgershall, as I have shown, does seem to have suffered something from the loss of its political importance, though that something cannot have been much. But there are no such signs in the next place upon our list. A village it is, and a village it always must have been. It lies snugly and compactly built on the slope of a gentle declivity, with a southern aspect, suggestive of fine old apricot-trees spreading over lichen-covered walls, surrounding large old-fashioned gardens. The country all round it is extremely pretty, thickly wooded with oak and beech, and fenced in from the outer world by the long ridges of the Wiltshire Downs—a borough that might almost have been preserved in a glass-case,—as cozy a little nest as ever a storm-tossed politician could wish to retire to in his age. This diminutive member of our ancient political system boasts, however, one feature of grandeur in which many of its larger brethren are deficient. It has a veritable town hall. This quaint little edifice, rather smaller than a travelling showman's van, is perched up on four little stone pillars, like a corn-rick, and stands in an open space, in the centre of the borough, still an object of tender pride with the ancient inhabitants of the

place. Before the Reform Bill the hustings, forsooth, used to be erected against its sides, and from these the candidates for election addressed the free and independent electors of Great Bedwyn. Afterwards it was turned into the village school. And finally, when it became dangerous to ascend the frail wooden stairs which had been worn by such a long succession of noble and knightly footsteps, it was abandoned to the hand of time. The ancient records of the corporation (heaven help us!) have been removed elsewhere, and would probably furnish very pretty reading for a lover of political antiquities like the present writer. But with a sight of these treasures mine eyes have not as yet been blessed. I and the friend in whose company I visited this spot encountered an old man who remembered the election business well, and had himself borne part in it. He told us how he used to go out with his father to meet the procession of the candidates which came in from the neighbouring great house, with all the pomps and glories of the old *régime*, flags flying, bands playing, and the candidates bowing right and left to an enthusiastic mob of forty persons.

Noverat ille

Luxuriam imperii veterem noctesque Neronis.

He remembered the barrels of beer rolling about the town street, almost as if they had been human: the open table that was kept for all alike at the inferior public-houses, and the stately banquets to which the quality sat down at the principal hotel, not an over-grown building, such as we have recently described, but a nice little county inn, where they still brew good beer. For Bedwyn, we observed, did not seem to have deteriorated since it had exchanged its old vicious mode of life for one of obscure but honest industry. The shops, we were told, were now more numerous and better than before. The population had increased. The liquor too, wondrous to relate, did not seem to have degenerated. There was none of that depressing air about the whole place which characterized the other. It wore a smiling and contented look, as if virtue agreed with it: the difference, we suppose, being traceable, as moralists would tell us, to a better temperament at bottom, such as comes purified through the fire of adversity, whereas worse natures are merely charred and blackened by it. Our cicerone informed us that his native town had numbered fifteen "vote houses," as they used to be called, which are, we suppose, the "ancient burgage messuages," and at the beginning of this century it seems to have contained about sixty or seventy other voters. What amused us as much as anything was, that he did not seem to have the least conception that the disfranchisement of his old borough had been part of any general scheme of reform affecting the entire nation. He attributed it to a local intrigue; and spoke mysteriously of a certain Doctor, who was at feud with the authorities, and used "to go up and down to Lannon, along of it," till the grievance was taken up by Government, and he got the borough disfranchised in order to spite the mayor. This place was one of the oldest boroughs in the kingdom, having sent members to

Parliament in the twenty-third year of Edward I. But to what influence this distinction was due I cannot tell. Whether any light is thrown upon the question by another piece of information which we gleaned from the same source, I should not like to say. Our guide showed us over the church, and pointed out a recumbent stone figure in one of the transepts which he said nobody could make out. He stated, however, that there "were a good many kings about in they days," and this was supposed to be "one of his warriors," adding cautiously, but simply, that "it was some years back." What period of time was represented to his own mind by "they days," or what degree of proximity was signified by the word "about," we failed to discover; while to allude to the heptarchy as having existed some years back, would have been considered an inaccurate mode of speaking, we should think, even in the days of William the Conqueror. It is possible, indeed, that the Reform Bill had affected this man's intellects so as to have destroyed in him altogether the ideas of space and time. But after all the best judges could only tell us that the effigy was supposed to be as old as the thirteenth century, and to represent a great feudal proprietor in the neighbourhood. It is not therefore beyond the bounds of possibility that in the fine old parish church lies the first founder of the borough, who must surely have been startled out of his long sleep by the echoes of the guns which told an eager nation that the "ancient régime" was dead.

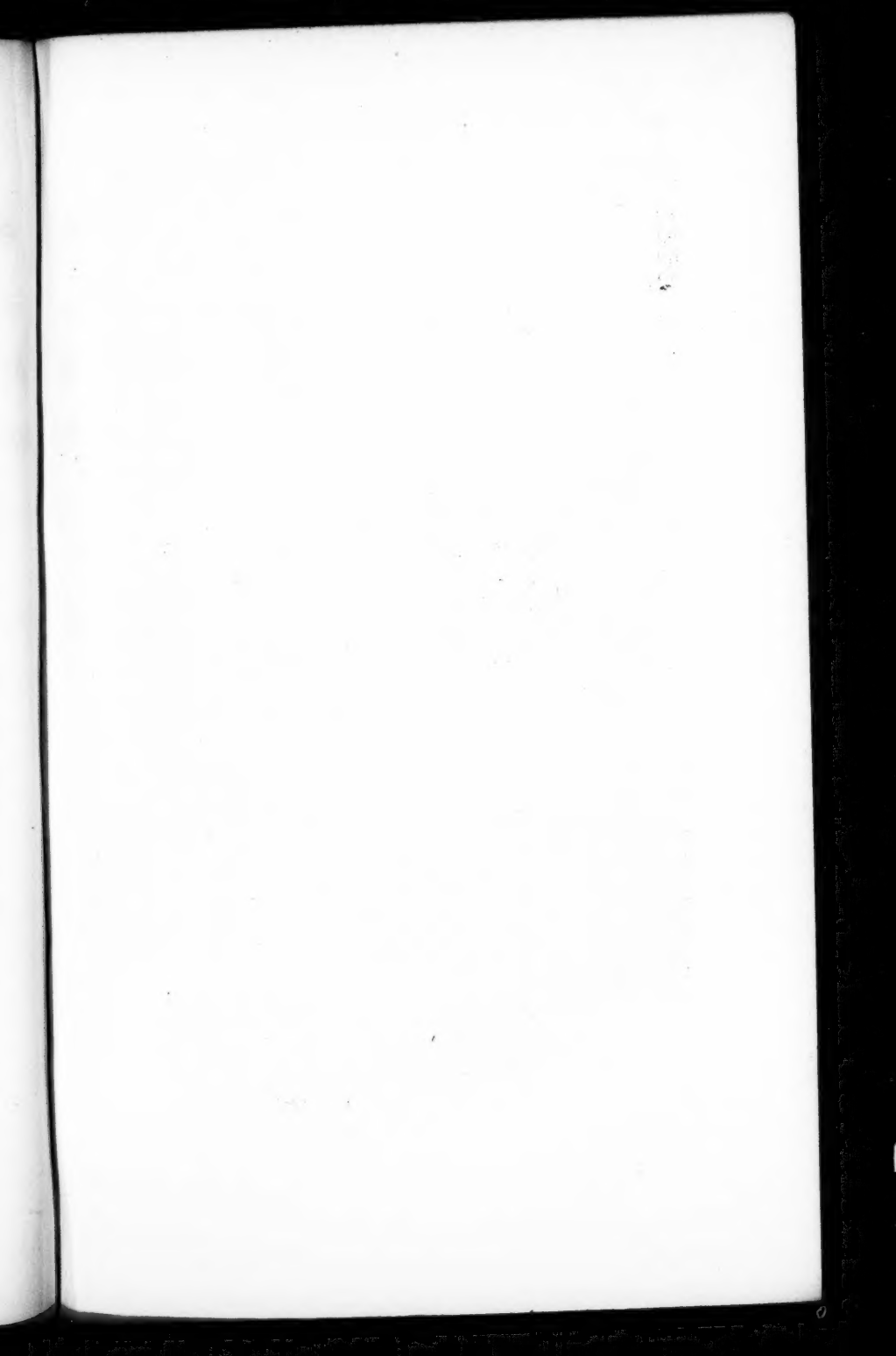
A collection of anecdotes illustrating the customs and traditions of the old boroughs might be made to fill volumes. But one thing the reader should remember, namely, that pocket boroughs and rotten boroughs were not convertible terms. A borough-monger might possess either the actual fee-simple of a small town, or merely its political interest. In the former case, of course, his influence was supreme and bribery superfluous. In the latter, it seems to have been usual to pay the voters a certain fixed sum at each election. In one Wiltshire borough the twelve electors who constituted the corporation used to dine together as often as they had to choose a member; and before dinner each man bound himself, by the most solemn oath, to exercise a free and conscientious choice. It is very likely that none of them were really guilty of perjury, though they all knew beforehand that under every one of the twelve cheese-plates which were placed upon the table would be found a fifty-pound note.

The case of Old Sarum is a very peculiar one. This place used always to be quoted as one of the most flagrant examples of the absurdity of the old system, and any allusion to the one inhabitant of that ancient borough, who was supposed to return its two members, was always thought a good joke. But the fact is, that, till about 120 years ago, there was not even one inhabitant of Old Sarum; and I remember being puzzled at first how to reconcile this fact with the record of "contested elections" which occurred there in the reign of Charles II., and again in the reign of Queen Anne. But on examining the point one sees that these were cases rather of disputed returns than of contests in the modern sense. Not but what

there were materials for even these. It did not follow in those days that because there were no residents, therefore there were no voters. And on the site of Old Sarum still flourished fourteen freeholders, who were likewise "burgage holders," and who met periodically under the "Election Elm"—a tree which I regarded with veneration—to choose their representatives in Parliament. Sarum *had* once been a place of great importance. Its castle was one of the chief barriers of the south-west against the incursions of the Welsh; and before the removal of its cathedral into the valley where it now stands, it must have been one of the finest cities in the kingdom. But when no longer required as a military post, it is easy to see that its inaccessible position, on the summit of a very steep and very lofty hill, would soon lead to its desertion. But as early as the reign of Henry VIII. the old town was in ruins, and not a single house in it inhabited. And we may suppose that by the end of the seventeenth century it had become just the bare mound that it is at present. About the middle of the eighteenth century the Pitt family, who were lords of the manor, and had estates in the adjoining village of Stratford, built the solitary house to which we have already referred. It was at first merely a shepherd's hut, and afterwards became a public-house. I could not understand what electioneering object was to be gained by the erection of this tenement. But some such object is alleged to have been at the bottom of it. It could hardly have been that the Pitt family intended by it to wipe off the reproach of a borough without an inhabitant, and representatives without constituents. To build *one* house for such a purpose was only to make the scandal more conspicuous. However, a proprietor with a strong sense of humour might perhaps have done it for the joke's sake. It is curious that there is no intermission of any consequence in the issue of writs to Old Sarum. It never seems to have struck any one till near the time of the Reform Bill, that there was anything at all odd in requiring two members to be returned to the House of Commons for a naked green hill tenanted exclusively by sheep. And this apparent blindness to what we now call a glaring abuse, is to my mind a strong confirmation of the views I have already expressed—in the eyes of men who regarded our scheme of representation simply as the recognized machines for giving effect to aristocratic government, Old Sarum *was* no abuse. The grandfather of the first Lord Chatham, who had been governor of Madras and was known as Governor Pitt, invested his Indian fortune in rotten boroughs, and Old Sarum was one of his purchases. His son Robert represented it in several parliaments. And in 1734, when his eldest son, Thomas, who had been returned for both Old Sarum and Oakhampton, elected to sit for the latter, his younger son William, the terrible count, became member for the former.

It is not until one has visited in the flesh two such places as we have here described that one can realize to its full extent the "anomalies" of the old system. We read in Macaulay's swinging style that "towns had dwindled into villages, villages had expanded into towns." But when you

actually see the villages in question, you feel that never until that moment had these words made an adequate impression. Such generalisations are of course very vague. Town and village are comparative terms; and by themselves would never teach one to suspect the existence of such places. Men had heard, indeed, of Old Sarum, but then, even in the pre-Reform era, Old Sarum was admitted to be monstrous; and one would not necessarily infer from the condition of Old Sarum the condition of Ludgershall and Bedwyn. Standing in the centre of the quiet street, in the midst of a population certainly not exceeding one thousand, if it equal that; surrounded by the familiar objects which have all our lives long been associated exclusively with an ordinary country village—not the village of fiction, mind, but the village of real life, with its half-dozen farmers, its two shops, its one clergyman, and its third or fourth share in a squire—surrounded, I say, by hay-ricks and corn-ricks, by cows coming in to be milked, by the horses going down to water; by the women sitting working on their doorsteps; by the beehives in the little cottage gardens; by the old well in one corner, and possibly the old stocks in another; and breathing all the time that pleasant, drowsy, humming atmosphere which belongs to such places in the summer time; one does at length feel, with overpowering force, that England must indeed be a practical nation to have looked on so long without a murmur, while towns of this magnitude returned a fourth of the representatives of England and Wales; and Leeds, Manchester, and Birmingham returned not one. A partial explanation of it is that Macaulay is wrong as usual in one branch of his generalisation. It is incorrect, as already stated, to speak of these bantam boroughs as “towns which had dwindled into villages.” They had never been towns at all. They had always been what they then were; and they were tolerated so long because the nation felt by instinct that they did represent a principle; and if they represented nothing else, as the wags of the period used to say,—why, so much the better for the principle. Men could not have reasoned this out. But they felt it all the same for that. Only when told that the days of that principle were numbered, that itself was obsolete, and that it was time to rise up and shake it off, for the sake of establishing a form of Government better suited to the age, they responded eagerly to the call. But they rose to vindicate new rights and powers, and not to recover lost ones.





"I AM GOING TO HARRY"

The Stockbroker at Dinglewood.

CHAPTER I.



THOSE who saw Dinglewood only after the improvements had been made could scarcely be able to form to themselves any idea of what it was before the Greshams came. I call them improvements because everybody used the word; but I cannot say I thought the house improved. It was an old-fashioned red-brick house, nothing to speak of architecturally—in the style of Kensington Palace and Kew, and the rest of those old homely royal houses. The drawing-room opened its tall narrow windows upon a little terrace, which was very green and grassy, and pleasant. I should be sorry to undertake to say why it was called

Dinglewood. Mr. Coventry made very merry over the name when he had it. He used to say it was because there were no trees; but that was not strictly the case. It was quite open and bare, it is true, towards the river, which we could not see from the Green; but there was a little grove of trees which interposed between us and the house, as if to shut out Dinglewood from the vulgarity of neighbours. It was a popular house in a quiet way when the Coventrys were there. They did not give parties, or pretend to take much trouble in the way of society, for Lady Sarah was always delicate; but when we were tired with our view on the Green, and our lawns and trees, we were always welcome on the Dinglewood terrace, where the old people were constantly to be found sitting out in the summer afternoons, Lady Sarah on her sofa, and Mr. Coventry with the newspapers and his great dog. The lawn went sloping down towards the river, which lay still and white under the sunshine, with a little green island, and a little grey house making a centre to the picture. As long as the sloping bank was lawn it was closely cut and kept like velvet; but when it became field these niceties stopped, and Lady Sarah's pet Alderney stood up to her knees in the cool clover. There was an old mulberry-

tree close to the wall of the house, which shaded the sofa ; and a gloomy yew on the other side did the same thing for Mr. Coventry, who was an old Indian and a salamander, and could bear any amount of sunshine. Lady Sarah's perpetual occupation was knitting. She knitted all sorts of bright-coloured things in brilliant German wool with big ivory pins, and her husband used to read the news to her. They read all the debates together, stopping every now and then to exchange their sentiments. Lady Sarah would say with her brisk little voice, "He might have made a better point there. I don't see that he proves his case. I don't agree with that;" and Mr. Coventry would stop and lay down the paper on his knees, and discuss it leisurely. There was no reason why they should not do it at their leisure. The best part of the summer days were spent thus by the old couple ; and the sunshine lay warm and still round them, and the leaves rustled softly, and the cool grass kept growing under their peaceful old feet. These feet tread mortal soil no longer, and all this has nothing in the world to do with my story. But it was a pretty sight in its way. They were not rich, and the furniture and carpets were very faded, and everything very different from what it came to be afterwards ; yet we were all very fond of Mr. Coventry and his pretty old wife, and the old-fashioned house was appropriate to them. I like to think of them even now.

We were all anxious, of course, after Mr. Coventry's death, to know who would buy the house ; (Lady Sarah could not bear it after he was gone, and, indeed, lived only a year after him,) and when it was known that young Mr. Gresham was the purchaser, it made quite a sensation on the Green. He was the son of old Gresham, who had bought Bishop's Hope, a noble place at Cookesley, about a dozen miles off, but had made all his fortune as a stockbroker, and, they say, not even the best kind of that. His son had succeeded him in business, and had lately married somebody in his own class. He was a nice-looking young fellow enough, and had been brought up at Eton, to be sure, like so many of those people's sons ; but still one felt that it was bringing in a new element to the Green. If his wife had been, as so often happens, a gentlewoman, it would have made things comparatively easy. But she was only the daughter of a mercantile man like himself, and there was great discussion among us as to what we should do when they came. Some families made up their minds at once not to call ; and some, on the other hand, declared that such rich people were sure to *fêter* the whole county, and that everybody would go to them. "If they had only been a *little* rich, it would never have answered ; but they are frightfully rich, and, of course, we must all go down on our knees," Lottie Stoke said. She was the most eager of all to know them ; for her youth was passing away, and she was not likely to marry, and the Stokes were poor. I confess I was curious myself to see how things would turn out.

Their first step, however, was one which took us all by surprise. Young Gresham dashed over in his Yankee waggon from Cookesley to go over the house, and the same day a charming barouche made the tour of the

Green, with a very pretty young woman in it, and a lovely little girl, and a matchless tiny Skye terrier—all going to inspect Dinglewood. The arms on the carriage were quartered to the last possibility of quartering, as if they had come through generations of heiresses and gentlemen of coat-armour, and the footman was powdered and dazzling to behold. Altogether it was by far the finest equipage that had been seen in these parts for a long time. Not to speak of Lady Denzil's, or the other great people about, her Majesty's own carriage, that she drives about the neighbourhood in, was not to be compared to it. Its emblazoned panels brushed against the privet hedges in poor old Lady Sarah's drive, which was only wide enough for her little pony-carriage, and I have no doubt were scratched and spoiled; but the next thing we heard about Dinglewood was that a flood of workmen had come down upon it, and that everything was to be changed. Young Mrs. Gresham liked the situation, but the house was far too small for her. My maid told me a new dining-room and drawing-room, with bed-rooms over, were to be added, and already the people had set to work. We all looked on thunderstruck while these "improvements" were going on: he had a right to do it, no doubt, as he had bought it, but still it did seem a great piece of presumption. The pretty terrace was all cut up, and the poor old mulberry-tree perished in the changes, though it is true that they had the sense not to spoil the view. They added two wings to the old house, with one sumptuous room in each. Poor Lady Sarah's drawing-room, which was good enough for her, these millionaires made into a billiard-room, and put them all *en suite*, making a passage thus between their two new wings. I don't deny, as I have already said, that they had a perfect right to do it; but all the same it was very odd to us.

And then heaps of new furniture came down from town; the waggons that brought it made quite a procession along the road. All this grandeur and display had a bad effect upon the neighbourhood. It really looked as if these new people were already crowing over us, whose carpets and hangings were a little faded and out of fashion. There was a general movement of indignation on the Green. All this expense might be well enough, for those who could afford it, in a town-house, people said, but in the country it was vulgar and stupid. Everything was gilded and ornamented and expensive in the new Dinglewood; Turkey carpets all over the house, and rich silk curtains and immense mirrors. Then after a while "the family" arrived. They came with such a flutter of fine carriages as had never been seen before among us. The drive had been widened, down which Lady Sarah's old grey pony used to jog so comfortably, and there was nothing to be seen all day long but smooth, shining panels and high-stepping horses whisking in and out. In the first place there was Mr. Gresham's Yankee waggon, with a wicked-looking beast in it, which went like the wind. Then there would be a cosy brougham carrying Mrs. Gresham to Shoreton shopping, or taking out the nurse and baby for an airing; and after lunch came the

pretty open carriage with the armorial bearings and the man in powder. We were too indignant to look round at first when these vehicles passed; but custom does a great deal, and one's feelings soften in spite of one's self. Of all the people on the Green, Lottie Stoke was the one who did most for the new people. "I mean to make mamma call," she said; and she even made a round of visits for the purpose of saying it. "Why shouldn't we all call on them? I think it is mean to object to them for being rich. It looks as if we were ashamed of being poor; and they are sure to have quantities of people from town, and to enjoy themselves—people as good as we are, Mrs. Mulgrave: they are not so particular in London."

"My dear Lottie," said I, "I have no doubt the Greshams themselves are quite as good as we are. That is not the question. There are social differences, you know."

"Oh, yes! I know," cried Lottie; "I have heard of them all my life, but I don't see what the better we are, for all our nicety; and I mean to make mamma call."

She was not so good as her word however, for Mrs. Stoke was a timid woman, and waited to see what other people would do. And in the meantime the Greshams themselves, independent of their fine house and their showy carriages, presented themselves, as it were, before us for approval. They walked to church on Sunday without any show, which made quite a revulsion in their favour; and she was very pretty and sweet-looking, and he was so like a gentleman that you could never have told the difference. And the end of it all was, that one fine morning Lady Denzil, without saying a word to any one, called; and after that, everybody on the Green.

I do not pretend to say that there was not a little air of newness about these young people. They were like their house, a little too bright, too costly, too luxurious. Mrs. Gresham gave herself now and then pretty little airs of wealth, which, to do her justice, were more in the way of kindness to others than display for herself. There was a kind of munificence about her which made one smile, and yet made one grow red and hot and just a little angry. It might not have mattered if she had been a princess, but it did not answer with a stockbroker's wife. She was so anxious to supply you with anything or everything you wanted. "Let me send it," she would say in a lavish way, whenever there was any shortcoming, and opened her pretty mouth and stared with all her pretty eyes, when her offers were declined. She wanted that delicate sense of other people's pride, which a true great lady always has. She did not understand why one would rather have one's own homely maid to wait, than borrow her powdered slave; and would rather walk than be taken up in her fine carriage. This bewildered her, poor little woman. She thought it was unkind of me in particular. "You can't *really* prefer to drive along in the dust in your little low carriage," she said, with a curious want of perception that my pony carriage was my own. This was the

only defect I found in her, and it was a failing which leant to virtue's side. Her husband was more a man of the world, but he too had money written all over him. They were dreadfully rich, and even in their freest moment they could not get rid of it—and they were young and open-hearted, and anxious to make everybody happy. They had people down from town as Lottie prophesied—fashionable people sometimes, and clever people, and rich people. We met all kinds of radicals, and artists, and authors, and great travellers at Dinglewood. The Greshams were rather proud of their literary acquaintances, indeed, which was surprising to us. I have seen old Sir Thomas look very queer when he was told he was going to meet So-and-So, who had written some famous book. "Who is the fellow?" he said privately to me, with a comical look, for he was not very literary in his tastes;—neither were the Greshams for that matter, but then, having no real rank, they appreciated a little distinction, howsoever it came; whereas the second cousin of any poor lord or good old decayed family was more to the most of us than Shakspeare himself or Raphael; though of course it would have been our duty to ourselves to be very civil to either of those gentlemen had we met them at dinner, anywhere on the Green.

But there was no doubt that this new lively household, all astir with new interests, new faces, talk and movement, and pleasant extravagance, woke us all up. They were so rich that they took the lead in many things, in spite of all that could be done to the contrary. None of us could afford so many parties. The Greshams had always something on hand. Instead of our old routine of dinners and croquet-parties, and perhaps two or three dances a year for the young people, there was an endless variety now at Dinglewood; and even if we elders could have resisted Mrs. Gresham's pretty winning ways on our own account, it would have been wicked to neglect the advantage for our children. Of course this did not apply to me, who have no children: but I was never disposed to stand very much on my dignity, and I liked the young couple. They were so fond of each other, and so good-looking, and so happy, and so ready—too ready—to share their advantages with everybody. Mrs. Gresham sent her man over with I don't know how much champagne the morning of the day when they were all coming to play croquet on my little lawn, and he wanted to know, with his mistress's love, whether he should come to help, or if there was anything else I wanted. I had entertained my friends in my quiet way before she was born, and I did not like it. Lottie Stoke happened to be with me when the message arrived, and took up the reasonable view, as she had got into the way of doing where the Greshams were concerned.

"Why should not they send you champagne?" she said. "They are as rich as Croesus, though I am sure I don't know much about him; and you are a lady living by yourself and can't be expected to think of all these things."

"My dear Lottie," said I—and I confess I was angry—"if you are

not content with what I can give you, you need not come to me. The Greshams can stay away if they like. Champagne in the afternoon when you are playing croquet! It is just like those *nouveaux riches*. They would think it still finer, I have no doubt, if they could drink pearls, like Cleopatra. Champagne!"

"They must have meant it for cup, you know," said Lottie, a little abashed.

"I don't care what they meant it for," said I. "You shall have cups of tea; and I am very angry and affronted. I wonder how they think we got on before they came!"

And then I sat down and wrote a little note, which I fear was terribly polite, and sent it and the baskets back with John Thomas, while Lottie went and looked at all the pictures as if she had never seen them before, and hummed little airs under her breath. She had taken up these Greshams in the most curious way. Not that she was an unreasonable partizan; she could see their faults like the rest of us, but she was always ready to make excuses for them. "They don't know any better," she would say softly when she was driven to the very extremity of her special pleading. And she said this when I had finished my note and was just sending it away.

"But why don't they know better?" said I; "they have had the same education as other people. He was at Eton, where a boy should learn how to behave himself, even if he does not learn anything else. And she went to one of the fashionable schools—as good a school as any of you ever went to."

"We were never at any school at all," said Lottie with a little bitterness. "We were always much too poor. We have never learned anything, we poor girls; whereas Ada Gresham has learned everything," she added, with a little laugh.

It was quite true. Poor little Mrs. Gresham was overflowing with accomplishments. There never was such an education as she had received. She had gone to lectures, and studied thorough bass, and knew all about chemistry, and could sympathize with her husband, as the newspapers say, and enter into all his pursuits. How fine it sounds in the newspapers! Though I was angry, I could not but laugh too—a young woman wanted an elaborate education indeed to be fit to be young Gresham's wife.

"Well," I said, "after all, I don't suppose she means to be impertinent, Lottie, and I like her. I don't think her education has done her much harm. Nobody could teach her to understand other people's feelings; and to be rich like that must be a temptation."

"I should like to have such a temptation," said Lottie, with a sudden sparkle in her eyes. "Fancy! there are four Greshams, and they are all as rich. The girl is married, you know, to a railway man; and, by-the-by," she went on suddenly after a pause, "they tell me one of the brothers is coming here to-day."

She said this in an accidental sort of way, but I could see there was

nothing accidental about it. She drew her breath hard, poor girl, and a little feverish colour got up in her cheeks. It is common to talk of girls looking out for husbands, and even hunting that important quarry. But when now and then in desperate cases such a thing does actually come before one's eyes, it is anything but an amusing sight. The Stokes were as poor as the Greshams were rich. Everard had ruined himself, and half-killed everybody belonging to him only the year before; and now poor Lottie saw a terrible chance before her, and rose to it with a kind of tragic valour. I read her whole meaning and resolution in her face, as she said, with an attempt at a smile, these simple-sounding words; and an absolute pang of pity went through me. Poor Lottie!—it was a chance, for her family and for herself—even for poor Everard, whom they all clung to, though he had gone so far astray. What a change it would make in their situation and prospects, and everything about them! You may say it was an ignoble foundation to build family comfort upon. I do not defend it in any way; but when I saw what Lottie meant, my heart ached for her. It did not seem to me ridiculous or base, but tragic and terrible; though to be sure in all likelihood there is nobody who will think so but me.

Before Lottie left me, Mrs. Gresham came rushing over, in her pretty summer dress, with her curls and ribbons fluttering in the breeze. She came to ask me why I had been so unkind, and to plead and remonstrate. "We have so much, we don't know what to do with it," she said; "Harry is always finding out some new vintage or other, and the cellars are overflowing. Why would not you use some of it? We have so much of everything we don't know what to do."

"I would rather not, thanks," I said, feeling myself flush; "what a lovely day it is. Where are you going for your drive? The woods will be delicious to-day."

"Oh, I have so much of the woods," cried Mrs. Gresham. "I thought of going towards Estcott to make some calls. But dear Mrs. Mulgrave, about the champagne?"

"It is a little too early for the heath," said Lottie steadily, looking our visitor in the face. "It is always cold there. What they call bracing, you know; but I don't care about being braced, the wind goes through and through one, even on a sunny day."

"It is because you are so thin," said Mrs. Gresham; "I never feel the cold for my part; but I shall not drive at all to-day—I forgot—I shall go and fetch Harry from the station, and come to you, Mrs. Mulgrave: and you will not be cross, but let me send back John Thomas with—"

"My dear, I am going to give you some tea," said I, "and my maids can manage beautifully; the sight of a gorgeous creature like John Thomas distracts them; they can do nothing but stare at his plush and his powder. We shall be very glad to have Mr. Gresham and you."

"But—" she began eagerly. Then she caught Lottie's eye, who had made some sign to her, and stopped short, staring at me with her blue

eyes. She could not make it out, and no hint short of positive demonstration could have shown her that she had gone too far. She stopped in obedience to Lottie's sign, but stared at me all the same. Her prosperity, her wealth, her habit of overcoming everything that looked in the least like a difficulty, had taken even a woman's instinct from her. She gazed at me, and by degrees her cheeks grew red: she saw she had made a mistake somehow, but even up to that moment could not tell what it was.

"Harry's brother is coming with him," she said, a little subdued; "may I bring him? He is the eldest, but he is not married yet. He is such a man of the world. Of course he might have married when he liked, as early as we did, there was nothing to prevent him; but he got into a fashionable set first, and then he got among the artists. He is quite what they call a Bohemian you know. He paints beautifully—Harry always consults Gerald before buying any pictures; I don't know what he does with all his money, for he keeps up no establishment, and no horses nor anything. I tell him sometimes he is an old miser, but I am sure I have no reason to say so, for he gives me beautiful presents. I should so like to bring him here."

"Yes, bring him by all means," said I; but I could not help giving a little sigh as I looked at Lottie, who was listening eagerly. When she saw me look at her, her face flamed scarlet, and she went in great haste to the window to hide it from Mrs. Gresham. She saw I had found her out, and did not know what compassion was in my heart. She gave a wistful glance up into my face as she went away. "Don't despise me!" it said. Poor Lottie! if it ever could be lawful to do evil that good might come! They went away together, the poor girl and the rich happy young wife. Lottie was a little the older of the two, and yet she was not old, and they were both pretty young women. They laid their heads together and talked earnestly as girls do, as they went out of my gate, and nobody could have dreamed that their light feet were entangled in any web of tragedy. The sight of the two who were so unlike, and the thought of the future which might bring them into close connection made me melancholy, I could not have told why.

CHAPTER II.

WE did not miss the champagne-cup that afternoon; indeed, I do not approve of such beverages for young people, and never sanction anything but tea before dinner. The Dinglewood people were doing their best to introduce these foolish extravagancies among us, but I for one would not give in. Young Gresham, though he took some tea, drew his wife aside the moment after, and I heard him question her.

"It was not my fault, Harry," she cried, not knowing I was so near. "She sent it all back, and Lottie said I had hurt her feelings.

I did not know what to do. She would not even have John Thomas to wait."

"Nonsense!" said Harry Gresham; "you should have insisted. We ought not to let her go to any expense. I don't suppose she has a shilling more than she wants for her own affairs."

"But I could not help it," said his wife.

I don't know what Lottie had said to her, but she was evidently a little frightened. As for Harry, I think he would have liked to leave a bank-note for me on one of the tables. People have told me since that it was a very bad sign, and that it is only when people are getting reckless about money that they think of throwing it away in presents; but I cannot say I have had much experience of that weakness. The new brother who had come with them was a very different kind of man. I cannot say I took to him at first. He was not a wealthy, simple-minded, lavish creature like his brother. He was more like other people. Harry Gresham was red and white, like a girl, inclining to be stout, though he was not above thirty, and with the manners which are, or were, supposed to be specially English—downright and straightforward. Gerald was a few years older, a little taller, bronzed with the sun, and bearing the indescribable look of a man who has mixed much with the world. I looked at Lottie Stoke when I made my first observations upon the stranger, and saw that she too was looking at him with a strange expression, half of repugnance, half of wistfulness in her eyes. Lottie had not done her duty in the way of marrying, as she ought to have done, in her early youth. She had refused very good offers, as her mother was too apt to tell with a little bitterness. Now at last, when things were going so badly with the family, she had made up her mind to try; but when she did so she expected a second Harry Gresham, and not this man of the world. She looked at him as a martyr might look, standing on the edge of a precipice, gathering up her strength for the plunge, shrinking yet daring everything. My party was quite dull for the first hour because of this pause which Lottie made on the brink, for she was always the soul of everything. When I saw her all at once rise up from the chair where she had been sitting obstinately beside old Mrs. Beresford, and go up to Mrs. Gresham, who was standing aside with her brother-in-law looking on, I knew she had made up her mind at last, and taken the plunge. An experienced rich young man of the nineteenth century! I thought to myself she might spare her pains.

Just at that moment I saw the gorgeous figure of John Thomas appear at the end of my lawn, and a sudden flush of anger came over me. I got up to see what he wanted, thinking they had sent him back again notwithstanding my refusal. But just before I reached him I perceived that his errand was to his master, to whom he gave a telegram. Mr. Gresham tore it open at my side. He ran his eye over the message, and muttered something between his teeth and grew red all over in indignation or trouble. Then, seeing me, he turned round, with an effort, with one of his broad smiles.

"Business even in the midst of pleasure," he said. "Is it not too bad?"

"If it is only business—," said I. Whenever I see one of those telegraph papers, it makes my heart beat. I always think somebody is ill or dead.

"Only business, by Jove!" said Harry. His voice was quite subdued, but he laughed—a laugh which sounded strange and not very natural. Then he gave himself a sort of shake, and thrust the thing into his pocket, and offered me his arm, to lead me back to my place. "By-the-by," he said, "I am ready to quarrel with you, Mrs. Mulgrave. When we are so near why don't you let us be of some use to you? It would be the greatest pleasure both to Ada and me."

"Oh, thanks; but indeed I don't want any help," I cried, abruptly coming to a sudden stop before Lady Denzil's chair.

"You are so proud," he said with a smile, and so left me to plunge into the midst of the game, where they were clamouring for him. He played all the rest of the afternoon, entering into everything with the greatest spirit; and yet I felt a little disturbed. Whether it was for Lottie, or whether it was for Harry Gresham I could not well explain to myself; a feeling came over me like the feeling with which one sometimes wakes in the morning without any reason for it—an uneasy restless sense that something somehow was going wrong.

The Greshams were the last of my party to go away, and I went to the gate with them, as I had a way of doing, and lingered there for a few minutes in the slanting evening light. It was nearly seven o'clock, but they did not dine till eight and were in no hurry. She wore a very pretty dress—one of those soft pale greys which soil if you look hard at them—and had gathered the long train over her arm like a figure in a picture; for though she was not very refined, Ada Gresham was not a vulgar woman to trail her dress over a dusty road. She had taken her husband's arm as they went along the sandy brown pathway, and Gerald on the other side carried her parasol and leant towards her to talk. As I looked at them I could not but think of the strange differences of life: how some people have to get through the world by themselves as best they may, and some have care and love and protection on every side of them. These two would have kept the very wind from blowing upon Ada; they were ready to shield her from every pain, to carry her in their arms over any thorns that might come in her way. The sunshine slanted sideways upon them as they went along, throwing fantastic broken shadows of the three figures on the hedgerow, and shining right into my eyes. I think I can see her now leaning on her husband's arm, looking up to his brother, with the pretty sweep of the grey silk over her arm, the white embroidered skirts beneath, and the soft rose-ribbons that caught the light. Poor Ada! I have other pictures of her, beside this one, in my memory now.

Next day we had a little discussion upon the new brother, in the after-

noon when my visitors looked in upon me. We did not confine ourselves to that one subject. We diverged, for instance, to Mrs. Gresham's toilette, which was so pretty. Lottie Stoke had got a new bonnet for the occasion; but she had made it herself, and though she was very clever, she was not equal to Elise.

"Fancy having all one's things made by Elise!" cried Lucy the little sister, with a rapture of anticipation. "If ever I am married, nobody else shall dress *me*."

"Then you had better think no more of curates," said some malicious critic, and Lucy blushed. It was not her fault if the curates amused her. They were mice clearly intended by Providence for fun and torture. She was but sixteen and meant no harm, and what else could the kitten do?

Then a great controversy arose among the girls as to the claims of the new brother to be called handsome. The question was hotly discussed on both sides, Lottie alone taking no part in the debate. She sat by very quietly, with none of her usual animation. Nor did she interpose when the Gresham lineage and connection—the little cockney papa who was like a shabby little miser, the mother who was large and affable and splendid, a kind of grand duchess in a mercantile way—were taken in hand. Lottie could give little sketches of them all when she so pleased; but she did not please that day.

"This new one does not look like a nobody," said one of my visitors. "He might be the Honourable Gerald for his looks. He is fifty times better than Mr. Gresham, though Mr. Gresham is very nice too."

"And he has such a lovely name!" cried Lucy. "Gerald Gresham! Any girl I ever heard of would marry him just for his name."

"They have all nice names," said the first speaker, who was young too, and attached a certain weight to this particular. "They don't sound like mere rich people. They might be of a good old family to judge by their names."

"Yes; she is Ada," said Lucy, reflectively, "and he is Harry, and the little boy's name is Percy. But Gerald is the darling! Gerald is the one for me!"

The window was open at the time, and the child was talking incautiously loud, so that I was not much surprised, for my part, when a peal of laughter from outside followed this speech, and Ada, with her brother-in-law in attendance, appeared under the verandah. Of course, Lucy was covered with confusion; but her blushes became the little creature, and gave her a certain shy grace which was very pretty to behold. As for Lottie, I think the contrast made her paler. Looking at her beautiful refined head against the light, nobody could help admiring it; but she was not round and dimpled and rosy like her little sister. After a while Gerald Gresham managed to get into the corner where Lottie was, to talk to her; but his eyes sought the younger creature all the same. A man has it all his own way when there is but one in the room. He was

gracious to all the girls, like a civilised English sultan ; but they were used to that, poor things, and took it very good-naturedly.

"It is not his fault if he is the only man in the place," said Lucy ; and she was not displeased, though her cheeks burned more hotly than ever when he took advantage of her incautious speech.

"I must not let you forget that it is Gerald who is the darling," he said, laughing. Of course it was quite natural, and meant nothing, and perhaps no one there but Lottie and myself thought anything of this talk ; but it moved her, poor girl, with a certain mortification, and had a curious effect upon me. I could not keep myself from thinking, Would it be Lucy after all ? After her sister had made up her mind in desperation ; after she had screwed her courage to the last fatal point ; after she had consciously committed herself and compromised her maiden uprightness, would it be Lucy who would win the prize without an effort ? I cannot describe the effect it had upon me. It made me burn with indignation to think that Lottie Stoke was putting forth all her powers to attract this stranger—this man who was rich, and could buy her if he pleased ; and, at the same time, his looks at Lucy filled me with the strangest sense of disappointment. I ought to have been glad that such humiliating efforts failed of success, and yet I was not. I hated them, and yet I could not bear to think they would be in vain.

"And Harry has gone to town again to-day," said Ada, with a pout of her pretty mouth, "though he promised to stay and take me up the river. They make his life wretched with those telegrams and things. I ask him, What is the good of going on like this, when we have plenty of money ? And then he tells me I am a little fool and don't understand."

"I always feel sure something dreadful has happened whenever I see a telegram," said Mrs. Stoke.

"Oh, we are quite used to them : they are only about business," said Ada, taking off her hat and smoothing back, along with a twist of her pretty hair, the slightest half visible pucker of care from her smooth young brow.

"Only business !" said Gerald. They were the same words Harry had said the day before, and they struck me somehow. When he caught my eye he laughed, and added something about the strange ideas ladies had. "As if any accident, or death, or burial could be half so important as business," he said, with the half sneer which we all use as a disguise to our thoughts. And some of the little party exclaimed, and some laughed with him. To be sure, a man in business, like Harry Gresham, or a man of the world, like his brother, must be less startled by such communications than such quiet country people as we were. That was easy enough to see.

That same night, when I came across from the Lodge, where I had been spending the evening, Dinglewood stood blazing out against the sky with all its windows lighted up. Sir Thomas, who was walking across the Green with me, as it was so fine a night, saw me turn my head that way and

looked too. The whole house had the air of being lighted up for an illumination. It always had; it revealed itself, its different floors, and even the use of its different rooms to all the world by its lights. The Greshams were the kind of people who have every new improvement that money can procure. They made gas for themselves, and lighted up the entire house, in that curious mercantile millionaire way which you never see in a real great house. Sir Thomas's look followed mine, and he shook his grey head a little.

"I hope no harm will come of it," he said; "they are going very fast over there, Mrs. Mulgrave. I hope they are able to keep it up."

"Able!" said I, "they are frightfully rich;" and I felt half aggrieved by the very supposition.

"Yes," said Sir Thomas, "they would need to be rich. For a little while that may do; but I don't think any man in business can be rich enough to stand that sort of thing for a long time together."

"Oh, they can bear it, no doubt," I said, impatient of Sir Thomas's old-fashioned ways. "Of course, it was very different in the Coventrys' time."

"Ah, in the Coventrys' time," said Sir Thomas, regretfully; "one does not often get such neighbours as the Coventrys. Take care of that stone. And now, here we are at your door."

"Good night!" said I, "and many thanks;" but I stood outside a little in the balmy evening air, as Sir Thomas went home across the Green. I could not see Dinglewood from my door, and the Lodge, which was opposite, glimmered in a very different way, with faint candles in Lady Denzil's chamber, and some of the servants' sleeping rooms, and the soft white lamp-light in the windows below; domestic and necessary lights, not like the blaze in the new house. Sir Thomas plodded quietly home, with his grey head bent and his hands behind him under his coat, in the musing tranquillity of old age; and a certain superstitious feeling came over me. It was my gaze at the illuminated house which made him say those uncomfortable words. I felt as if I had attracted to the Greshams, poor children, in their gaiety and heedlessness, the eye of some sleeping Fate.

CHAPTER III.

I HAVE often been impatient in reading books, to find the story go on from one party to another, from one ball to another, as if life had nothing more important in it. But sometimes no doubt it does happen so. The life of the Greshams was made up of balls and parties; they were never alone; Dinglewood blazed out to the skies every evening, and the carriages flashed out and in, and one kind of merry-making or another went on all day. Lottie Stoke was there continually, and there grew up a curious friendship, half strife half accord, between Gerald and herself. He had nothing

to do with the business as it turned out, and consequently was not half so rich. But still he was very well off. I don't know what it is about people in business which gives them a kind of primitive character: they are less sophisticated than the rest of us, though possibly not more simple. The Greshams took a simple pleasure in pleasure for itself, without making it a mere medium for other things, as most of us do. They were fond of company, fond of dancing, delighted with picnics, and even with croquet, without any ulterior motive, like children. They were fond even of their wealth, which gave them so many pretty and so many pleasant things. They enjoyed it with all their hearts, and took an innocent-foolish delight in it, which spiteful people set down to purse-pride; but which in reality was more like the open satisfaction of children in their dear possessions. Gerald was a very different being: I never saw him without feeling that his visit was not a mere visit, but had some motive in it. Before Lottie roused him to talk and battle with her, he would look on at their great parties with a curious, anxious, dissatisfied air, as if he suspected or feared something. I think poor Lottie went further than she meant to go: she grew interested herself, when she had meant only to interest him, and was more excited by his presence than he was by hers. They carried on a kind of perpetual duel, very amusing to the spectators, and there was no doubt that he liked it. But he liked Lucy's funny little shy speeches too; and he had some interest more absorbing, more serious than either, which made his face very grave when the two girls were not there. Harry Gresham had sometimes the air of getting impatient of his brother's presence. Now and then they passed my house walking together, and not enjoying their walk, according to appearances. Once as I stood at my gate I heard Harry say sharply, "In any case Ada has her settlement," with a defiant air. And Gerald's face was full of remonstrance and expostulation. I could not help taking a great interest in these young people, and feeling a little anxious at the general aspect of affairs.

Things were in this state when the ball was given on Mrs. Gresham's birthday. I had nobody to take charge of for a wonder, and nothing to do but look on. The entire suite of rooms was thrown open, ablaze with light and sweet with flowers. There were great banks of geraniums in every corner where they could be piled, and the whole neighbourhood had been ravaged for roses. The room in which I took refuge was the smallest of all, which had been old Lady Sarah's boudoir in old times, and was a little removed from the dancing, and cooler than the rest. It had one little projecting window, not large enough to be called a bay, which looked out upon the terrace just above the spot where the old couple used to sit in the summer days. It was open, and the moon streamed in, making a curious contrast with the floods of artificial light. Looking out from it, you could see the Thames, like a silver ribbon, at the bottom of the slope, and the little island and the little house gleaming out white, with intense black shadows. Lottie Stoke came up to me while I stood at the

window, and looked out over my shoulder. "It looks like the ghost of the river and the ghost of the island," she said, putting her pretty arm round my waist with an agitated grasp. "I almost think we are all ghosts too."

"A curious moment to think so," said Gerald Gresham. My back was turned to them, so that I did not see him, but there sounded something like a thrill of excitement in the half sneer of his voice.

"Not curious at all," said Lottie; "how many of us are really here do you think? I know where Mrs. Mulgrave is! She is outside on the terrace with old Lady Sarah, listening to the old people's talk; though I am holding her fast all the same. We are in all sorts of places, the real halves of us; but our doubles do the dancing and the laughing, and eat the ices quite as well. It is chilly to be a ghost," said Lottie with a laugh; "come in from the window, I am sure there is a draught there."

"There is no draught," said Gerald; "you are afraid of being obliged to go into particulars, that is all."

"I am not in the least afraid," said Lottie. "There is Mrs. Damerel. She is in the nursery at the Rectory, though you think you have her here. She is counting Agatha's curl-papers to see if there is the right number; for children are never properly attended to when the mother's eye is wanting. I don't know where you are, Mr. Gerald Gresham; that would be too delicate an inquiry. But look, your brother has gone upon 'Change, though he is in the middle of his guests. He looks as like business as if he had all the Reduced Consols on his mind; he looks as if—good heavens!"

Lottie stopped, and her tone was so full of alarm and astonishment, that I turned suddenly round to look too, in a fright. Harry Gresham was standing at the door; he had a yellow envelope in his hand, another of those terrible telegrams which are always bringing misery. He had turned round unawares facing us, and facing the stream of people who were always coming and going. I never saw in all my life so ghastly a face. It showed the more that he was so ruddy and cheerful by nature. In a moment every tinge of colour had disappeared from it. His mouth was drawn down, his blue eyes looked awful, shrinking back, as it were, among the haggard lines of the eyelids. The sight of him struck Lottie dumb, and came upon me like a touch of horror. But Gerald it was evident was not taken by surprise. Some crisis which he had been looking for had come at last.

"He has had some bad news," he said; "excuse me, my mother is ill—it must be that;" and he went through the stream of guests, fording the current, as it were, with noiseless rapidity. As for Lottie, she drew me back into the recess of the window and clung to me and cried—but not for Harry Gresham. Her nerves were at the highest strain, and broke down under this last touch; that was all.

"I knew something was going to happen," she said. "I felt it in the air; but I never thought it was coming upon them."

"It must be his mother," I said, though I did not think so. "Hush, Lottie! don't frighten *her*, poor child."

Lottie was used to restraining herself, and the tears relieved her. She dried her eyes and gave me a nervous hug as she loosed her arm from my waist.

"I cannot stand this any longer," she said; "I must go and dance, or something. I know there is trouble coming, and if I sit quiet I shall make a fool of myself. But you will help them if you can," she cried in my ear. Alas, what could I do?

By the time she left me the brothers had disappeared; and after half-an-hour's waiting, as nothing seemed to come of it, and as the heat increased, I went to the window again. The moon had gone off the house, but still shone white and full on the lawn, like a great sheet of silvery gauze bound and outlined by the blackest shadow. My mind had gone away from that temporary interruption. I was not thinking about the Greshams at all, when all at once I heard a rustle under the window. When I looked down two figures were standing there in the shadow. I thought at first they were robbers, perhaps murderers waiting to waylay some one. All my self-command could not restrain a faint exclamation. There seemed a little struggle going on between the two. "You don't know her," said the one; "why should you trust her?" "She is safer than the servants," said the other, "and she is fond of poor Ada." If my senses had not been quickened by excitement and alarm I should never have heard what they said. Then something white was held up to me in a hand that trembled.

"Give it to Ada," said Harry Gresham in a quick breathless imperative voice.

I took the bit of paper and clutched it in my hand, not knowing what I did, and then stood stupefied, and saw them glide down in the dark shadow of the house towards the river. Where were they going? What had happened? This could be no sudden summons to a mother's death-bed. They went cautiously in the darkness, the two brothers, keeping among the trees; leaning out of the window as far as I could, I saw Gerald's slighter figure and poor Harry's portly one, emerge into the moonlight close to the river, just upon the public road. Then I felt some one pull me on the other side. It was Lottie who had come back, excited, to ask if I had found out anything.

"I thought you were going to stretch out of the window altogether," she said, with a half-suspicious glance; and I held my bit of paper tight, with my fan in my other hand.

"I was looking at the moon," I said. "It is a lovely night. I am sorry it has gone off the house. And then the rooms are so hot inside."

"I should like to walk on the terrace," said Lottie, "but my cavalier has left me. I was engaged to him for this dance, and he has never come to claim it. Where has he gone?"

"I suppose he must have left the room," I said.

"I suppose it is their mother who is ill; perhaps they have slipped out quietly not to disturb the guests. If that is the case, you should go and stand by Mrs. Gresham, Lottie. She will want your help."

"But they never would be so unkind as to steal away like this and leave everything to Ada!" cried Lottie. "Never! Harry Gresham would not do it for twenty mothers. As for Gerald, I daresay *any* excuse—"

And here she stopped short, poor girl, with an air of exasperation, and looked ready to cry again.

"Never mind," I said; "go to Mrs. Gresham. Don't say anything, Lottie, but stand by her. She may want it, for anything we know."

"As you stood by us," said Lottie, affectionately; and then she added with a sigh and a faint little smile, "But it never could be so bad as that with them."

I did not make her any reply. I was faint and giddy with fear and excitement; and just then, of course, Admiral Fortis's brother, a hazy old gentleman, who was there on a visit, and *hovered* for hours together, whenever he could get a listener, hobbled up to me. He had got me into a corner, as it were, and built entrenchments round me before I knew, and then he began his longest story of how his brother had been appointed to the *Bellerophon*, and how it was his interest that did it. The thing had happened half a century before, and the Admiral had not been at sea at all for half that time, and here was a present tragedy going on beside us, and the message of fate crushed up with my fan in my hand. Lottie Stoke made her appearance in the doorway several times, casting appealing looks at me. Once she beckoned, and pointed energetically to the drawing-room in which poor little Mrs. Gresham was. But when I got time to think, as I did while the old man was talking, I thought it was best, on the whole, to defer giving my letter, whatever it was. It could not be anything trifling or temporary which made the master of the house steal away in the darkness. I have had a good many things put into my hands to manage, but I don't think I ever had anything so difficult as this. For I did not know, and could not divine, what the sudden misfortune was which I had to conceal from the world. All this time Mr. Fortis went on complacently with his talk about the old salt-water lords who were dead and gone. He stood over me, and was very animated; and I had to look up to him, and nod and smile, and pretend to listen. What ghosts we were, as Lottie said! My head began to swim at last as Mr. Fortis's words buzzed in my ear. "*My lord,*" I said, "*my brother's services—not to speak of my own family influence*"—This formed a kind of chorus to it, and came in again and again. He was only in the middle of his narrative when Lottie came up, making her way through all obstacles. She was trembling, too, with excitement which had less foundation than mine.

"I can't find Mr. Gresham anywhere," she whispered. "He is not

in any of the rooms ; none of the servants have seen him, and it is time for supper. What are we to do ? ”

“ Is Ada alarmed ? ” said I.

“ No ; she is such a child,” said Lottie. “ But she is beginning to wonder. Come and say something to her. Come and do something. Don’t sit for ever listening to that tiresome old man. I shall go crazy if you do not come ; and she dancing as if nothing had happened ! ”

Mr. Fortis had waited patiently while this whispering went on. When I turned to him again he went on the same as ever. “ This was all to the senior sea lord, you understand, Mrs. Mulgrave. As for the other—”

“ I hope you will tell me the rest another time,” I said, like a hypocrite. “ I must go to Mrs. Gresham. Lottie has come to fetch me. I am so sorry—”

“ Don’t say anything about it,” said Mr. Fortis. “ I shall find an opportunity,” and he offered me his arm. I had to walk with him looking quite at my ease through all those pretty groups, one and another calling to me as I passed. “ Oh, please tell me if my wreath is all right,” Nelly Fortis whispered, drawing me from her uncle. “ Mrs. Mulgrave, will you look if I am torn ? ” cried another. Then pair after pair of dancers came whirling along, making progress dangerous. Such a sight at any time, when one is past the age at which one takes a personal interest in it, is apt to suggest a variety of thoughts ; but at this moment ! Lottie hovered about me, a kind of *avant courier*, clearing the way for me. There was something amazing to me in her excitement, especially as, just at the moment when she was labouring to open a way for me, Ada Gresham went flying past, her blue eyes shining, her cheeks more like roses than ever. She gave me a smiling little nod as her white dress swept over my dark one, and was gone to the opposite end of the room before I could say a word. Lottie drew her breath hard at the sight. Her sigh sounded shrill as it breathed past me. “ Baby ! ” she whispered. “ Doll ! ” And then the tears came to her eyes. I was startled beyond description by her looks. Had she come to *care* for Gerald in the midst of that worldly dreadful scheme of hers ? or what did her agitation mean ?

It was time for supper, however, and the elders of the party began to look for it ; and there were a good many people wondering and inquiring where was Mr. Gresham ? where were the brothers ? Young ladies stood with injured faces, who had been engaged to dance with Harry or Gerald ; and Ada herself, when her waltz was over, began to look about anxiously. By this time I had got rid of Mr. Fortis, and made up my mind what to do. I went up to her and stopped her just as she was asking one of the gentlemen, had he seen her husband ?—where was Harry ? I kept Harry’s bit of paper fast in my hand. I felt by instinct that to give her that would only make matters worse. I made up the best little story I could about old Mrs. Gresham’s illness.

"They both went off quite quietly, not to disturb the party," I said. "I was to put off telling you as long as I could, my dear, not to spoil your pleasure. They could not help themselves. They were very much put out at the thought of leaving you. But Sir Thomas will take Mr. Gresham's place; and you know they were obliged to go."

Tears sprang to poor Ada's eyes. "Oh, how unkind of Harry," she cried, "to go without telling me. As if I should have kept on dancing had I known. I don't understand it at all—to tell you, and go without a word to me!"

"My dear, he would not spoil your pleasure," I said; "and it would have been so awkward to send all these people away. And you know she may get better after all."

"That is true," said easy-minded Ada. "It *would* have been awkward breaking up the party. But it is odd about mamma. She was quite well yesterday. She was to have been here to-night."

"Oh, it must have been something sudden," I cried, at the end of my invention. "Shall I call Sir Thomas? What can I do to be a help to you? You must be Mr. and Mrs. Gresham both in one for to-night."

Ada put her laced handkerchief up to her eyes and smiled a little faint smile. "Will you tell Sir Thomas?" she said, "I feel so bewildered I don't know what to do."

Then I commenced another progress in search of Sir Thomas, Lottie Stoke still hovering about me as pale as a spirit. She took my arm as we went on. "Was that all a story?" she whispered in my ear, clasping my arm tightly with her hands. I made her no answer; I dared not venture even to let her see my face. I went and told the same story very circumstantially over again to Sir Thomas. I hope it was not a great sin; indeed, it might be quite true for anything I could tell. It was the only natural way of accounting for their mysterious absence; and everybody was extremely sorry, of course, and behaved as well as possible. Old Mrs. Gresham was scarcely known at Dinglewood, and Ada, it was evident, was not very profoundly affected after the first minute by the news, so that, on the whole, the supper-table was lively enough, and the very young people even strayed into the dancing-room after it. But of course we knew better than that when trouble had come to the house. It was not much above one o'clock in the morning when they were all gone. I pretended to go too, shaking off Lottie Stoke as best I could, and keeping out of sight in a corner while they all streamed away. On the whole, I think public opinion was in favour of Harry Gresham's quiet departure without making any disturbance. "He was a very good son," people said, and then some of them speculated if the poor lady died, how Harry and his wife would manage to live in the quietness which family affliction demanded. "They will bore each other to death," said a lively young man. "Oh, they are devoted to each other," cried a young lady. Not a suspicion entered any one's mind. The explanation was quite

satisfactory to everybody but Lottie Stoke ; but then she had seen Harry Gresham's face.

When I had made quite sure that every one was gone, I stole back quietly into the blazing deserted rooms. Had I ever been disposed to moralise over the scene of a concluded feast, it certainly would not have been at that moment. Yet there was something pathetic in the look of the place,—brilliant as day, with masses of flowers everywhere, and that air of lavish wealth, prodigality, luxury—and to feel that one carried in one's hand something that might turn it into the scene of a tragedy, and wind up its bright story with the darkest conclusion. My heart beat loud as I went in. My poor little victim was still in the dancing-room—the largest and brightest of all. She had thrown herself down on her sofa, with her arms flung over her head like a tired child. Tears were stealing down her pretty cheeks. Her mouth was pouting and melancholy. When she saw me she rose with a sudden start, half annoyed, half pleased, to have some one to pour out her troubles upon. "I can't help crying," she said. "I don't mean to blame Harry ; but it was unkind of him to go away without saying a word to me. We never, never parted in that way before ;" and from tears the poor little woman fell into sobs,—grievous, innocent sobs, all about nothing, that broke one's heart.

"I have come to tell you something," I said, "though I don't know myself what it is. I am afraid it is something worse than you think. I said *that* because your brother-in-law said it ; but I don't believe it is anything about Mrs. Gresham. Your husband put this into my hand through the window as he went away. Take courage, dear. You want all your courage—you must keep up for the sake of the children, Ada !"—

I babbled on, not knowing what words I used, and she stared at me with bewildered eyes. "Into your hand through the window !" she said. She could not understand. She looked at the paper as if it were a charm. Then she opened it slowly, half afraid, half stupefied. Its meaning did not seem to penetrate her mind at first. After a while she gave a loud sudden shriek, and turned her despairing eyes on me. Her cry was so piercing and sudden that it rang through the house and startled every one. She was on the verge of hysterics, and incapable of understanding what was said to her, but the sight of the servants rushing to the door to ask what was the matter, brought her to herself. She made a brave effort and recovered something like composure, while I sent them away ; and then she held out to me the letter which she had clutched in her hand. It was written in pencil, and some words were illegible. This was what Harry said :—

"Something unexpected has happened to me, my darling. I am obliged to leave you without time even to say good-by. You will know all about it only too soon. It is ruin, Ada—and it is my own fault—but I never meant to defraud any man. God knows I never meant it. Try

and keep up your heart, dear; I believe it will blow over, and you will be able to join me. I will write to you as soon as I am safe. You have your settlement. Don't let anybody persuade you to tamper with your settlement. My father will take care of that. Why should you and the children share my ruin? Forgive me, dearest, for the trouble I have brought on you. I dare not pause to think of it. Gerald is with me. If they come after me, say I have gone to Bishop's Hope."

"What does it mean?" cried poor Ada close to my ear. "Oh tell me, you are our friend! What does it mean?"

"God knows," I said. My own mind could not take it in, still less could I express the vague horrors that floated across me. We sat together with the lights blazing round us, the grand piano open, the musicians' stands still in their places. Ada was dressed like a queen of fairies, or of flowers: her gown was white, covered with showers of rosebuds; and she had a crown of natural roses in her bright hair. I don't know how it was that her dress and appearance suddenly impressed themselves on me at that moment. It was the horror of the contrast, I suppose. She looked me piteously in the face, giving up all attempt at thought for her own part, seeking the explanation from me. "What is it?" she asked. "Why has he gone away? who is coming after him? Oh, my Harry! my Harry!" the poor young creature moaned. What could I say? I took her in my arms and kissed her. I could do no more.

At this moment there came a loud knocking at the door. The house had fallen into deadly stillness, and at that hour of the night, and in the state we were, the sound was horrible. It rang through the place as if it had been uninhabited, waking echoes everywhere. Ada's very lips grew white—she clasped her small hands together and wrung them. "It is some one who has forgotten something," I said, but my agitation was so great that I felt a difficulty in speaking. We sat and listened in frightful suspense while the door was opened and the sound of voices reached us. It was not Harry who had come back; it was not any one belonging to the place. Suddenly Ada rushed to the door with a flash of momentary petulance which simulated strength. "If it is any one for Mr. Gresham, bring him in here," she cried imperiously. I hurried after her and took her hand. It was like touching an electric machine. She was so strung to the highest pitch that only to touch her made me thrill and vibrate all over. And then the two men—two homely black figures—startled even in spite of their acquaintance with strange sights, came hesitatingly forward into the blazing light to confront the flower-crowned, jewelled, dazzling creature, made up of rose and lily, and diamond and pearl. They stood thunderstruck before her, notwithstanding the assurance of their trade. Probably they had never in their lives seen such an apparition before. The foremost of the two took off his hat with a look of deprecation. I do not think Ada had the least idea who they were. They were her husband's enemies, endowed with a certain dignity by that fact. But I

knew in a moment, by instinct, that they must be London detectives in search of him, and that the very worst possibility of my fears had come true.

I cannot tell what we said to these men or they to us ; they were not harsh nor unfeeling ; they were even startled and awestruck in their rough way, and stepped across the room cautiously, as if afraid of hurting something. We had to take them over all the house, through the rooms in which not a single light had been extinguished. To see us in our ball dresses, amid all that silent useless blaze of light, leading these men about, must have been a dreadful sight. For my part, though my share in it was nothing, I felt my limbs shake under me when we had gone over all the rooms below. But Ada took them all over the house. They asked her questions and she answered them in her simplicity. Crime might have fled out of that honest joyous home, but it was innocence, candid and open, with nothing to conceal, which dwelt there. I had to interfere at last and tell them we would answer no more questions ; and then they comforted and encouraged us in their way. "With this fine house and all these pretty things you'll have a good bit of money yet," said the superior of the two, "and if Mr. Gresham was to pay up, they might come to terms."

"Then is it debt ?" cried I, with a sudden bound of hope.

The man gave a short laugh. "It's debt to the law," he said. "It's felony, and that's bad ; but if you could give us a bit of a clue to where he is, and this young lady would see 'em and try, why it mightn't be so bad after all. Folks often lets a gentleman go when they won't let a common man."

"Would money do it ?" cried poor Ada ; "and I have my settlement. Oh, I will give you anything, everything I have, if you'll let my poor Harry go."

"We haven't got him yet, ma'am," said the man. "If you can find us any clue—"

And it was then I interfered ; I could not permit them to go on with their cunning questions to poor Ada. When they went away she sank down on a sofa near that open window in the boudoir from which I had seen Harry disappear. The window had grown by this time "a glimmering square," full of the blue light of early dawn. The birds began to chirp and stir in the trees ; the air which had been so soft and refreshing grew chill and made us shiver in our light dresses ; the roses in Ada's hair began to fade and shed their petals silently over her white shoulders. As long as the men were present she had been perfectly self-possessed ; now suddenly she burst into a wild torrent of tears. "Oh, Harry, my Harry, where is he ? why did not he take me with him ?" she cried. I cannot say any more, though I think every particular of that dreadful night is burned in on my memory. Such a night had never occurred in my recollection before.

Then I got Ada to go to bed, and kept off from her the sleepy insolent

man in powder who came to know if he was to sit up for master. "Your master has gone to Bishop's Hope," I said, "and will not return to-night;" the fellow received what I said with a sneer. He knew as well, or perhaps better than we did, what had happened. Everybody would know it next day. The happy house had toppled down like a house of cards. Nothing was left but the helpless young wife, the unconscious babies, to fight their battle with the world. There are moments when the sense of a new day begun is positive pain. When poor Ada fell into a troubled sleep, I wrapped myself up and opened the window and let in the fresh morning air. Looking out over the country, I felt as if I could see everything. There was no charitable shadow now to hide a flying figure: every eye would be upon him, every creature spying his flight. Where was Harry? When I looked at the girl asleep—she was but a girl, notwithstanding her babies—and thought of the horror she would wake to, it made my heart sick. And her mother was dead. There seemed no one to stand by her in her trouble but a stranger like me.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Ada woke, however, instead of being, as I was, more hopeless, she was almost sanguine. "There is my money, you know," she said. "After all, so long as it is only money.—I will go and see them, as the men said, and they will come to terms. So long as we are together, what do I mind whether we have a large house or a little one? And Harry himself speaks of my settlement. Don't cry. I was frightened last night; but now I see what to do. Will you come up to town with me by the twelve o'clock train? And you shall see all will come right."

I had not the heart to say a word. I went home, and changed that wretched evening dress which I had worn all through the night. It was a comfort to throw it off and cast it away from me; and I never wore it again; the very sight of it made me ill ever after. I found Ada almost in high spirits with the strength of her determination and certainty that she was going to redeem her husband and make all right, when I went back. Just before noon, however, when she was putting on her bonnet to start, a carriage swept up to the door. I was at the window of the dining-room when it came in sight, waiting for the brougham to convey us to the station. And the rector and his wife were coming up the avenue with "kind inquiries," in the full belief that old Mrs. Gresham was dying, and that the house was "in affliction." No wonder they started and stared at the sight. It was old Mrs. Gresham herself, in her pink ribbons, fresh and full and splendid, in robust health, and all the colours of the rainbow, who came dashing up, with her stately bays, to the door.

I had only time to realise that all our little attempts to keep up appearances were destroyed for ever when the old people came in; for

Harry's father had come too, though no one ever noticed him in presence of his wife. Mrs. Gresham came in smiling and gracious, in her usual affable and rather overwhelming way. She would have dismissed me majestically before she went to her daughter-in-law, but I was in reality too obtuse, by reason of fatigue and excitement, to understand what she meant. When she went to Ada the old man remained with me. He was not an attractive old man, and I had scarcely spoken to him before. He walked about the room looking at everything, while I sat by the window. If he had been an auctioneer valuing the furniture, he could not have been more particular in his investigations. He examined the handsome oak furniture, which was the envy of the Green,—the immense mirrors, the great china vases, the pictures on the walls,—as if making a mental calculation. Then he came and stood by me, and began to talk. "In my time young people were not so extravagant," he said. "There are thousands of pounds, I believe, sunk in this house."

"Mr. Gresham had a great deal of taste," I said, faltering.

"Taste! Nonsense. You mean waste," said the old man, sitting down astride on a carved chair, and looking at me across the back of it. "But I admit the things have their value—they'll sell. Of course you know Harry has got into a mess?" he went on. "Women think they can hush up these things; but that's impossible. He has behaved like an idiot, and he must take the consequences. Fortunately the family is provided for. Her friends need not be concerned in that respect."

"I am very glad," said I, as it was necessary to say something.

"So am I," said old Mr. Gresham. "I suppose they would have come upon me if that had not been the case. It's a bad business; but it is not so bad as it might have been. I can't make out how a son of mine should have been such an ass. But they all go so fast in these days. I suppose you had a very grand ball last night? A ball!" he repeated, with a sort of snort. I don't know if there was any fatherly feeling at all in the man; but if there was he hid it under this mask of harshness and contempt.

"Will not Mr. Gresham return?" I asked, foolishly; but my mind was too much worn out to have full control of what I said.

The old man gave a shrug, and glanced at me with a mixture of scorn and suspicion. "I can't say what may happen in the future," he said, drily. "I should advise him not. But Ada can live where she likes—and she will not be badly off."

Old Mrs. Gresham stayed a long time upstairs with her daughter-in-law; so long that my patience almost deserted me. Mr. Gresham went off, after sitting silent opposite to me for some time, to look over the house, which was a relief; and no doubt I might have gone too, for we were far too late for the train. But I was too anxious to go away. When the two came down the old lady was just as cheerful and overwhelming as usual, though poor Ada was deadly pale. Mrs. Gresham came in with her rich, bustling, prosperous look, and shook hands with

me over again. "I am sure I beg your pardon," she said; "I had so much to say to Ada. We have not met for a whole month; and, poor child, they gave her such a fright last night. My dear, don't you mean to give us some luncheon? Grandpapa never takes lunch; you need not wait for him: but I am quite hungry after my long drive."

Then poor Ada rose and rung the bell; she was trembling so that she tottered as she moved. I saw that her lips were dry, and she could scarcely speak. She gave her orders so indistinctly that the man could not hear her. "Luncheon!" cried the old lady, in her imperious way. "Can't you hear what Mrs. Gresham says? Lunch directly—and tell my people to be at the door in an hour. Ada, a man who stared in my face like that, and pretended not to understand, should not stay another day in my house; you are a great deal too easy. So your ball was interrupted last night, Mrs. Mulgrave," she went on with a laugh, "and the blame laid on me. Oh, those boys! I hope the good people hereabouts will not take offence. I will never forgive them, though, for giving Ada such a fright, poor child. She thought I was dying, I suppose; and it was only one of Gerald's sporting scrapes. Some horse was being tampered with, and he would have lost thousands if they had not rushed off; so they made out I was dying, the wretched boys. Ha, ha! I don't look much like dying to-day."

"No, indeed," was all I could say. As for Ada she never opened her white lips, except to breathe in little gasps like a woman in a fever. The old lady had all the weight of the conversation to bear; and, indeed, she was talking not for our benefit, but for that of the servants, who were bringing the luncheon. She looked so rich and assured of herself that I think they were staggered in their certainty of misfortune and believed her for the moment. The young footman, who had just been begging me privately to speak a word for him to secure him another place, gave me a stealthy imploring look, begging me, as it were, not to betray him. The old gentleman was out, going over the house and grounds, but Mrs. Gresham ate a very good luncheon and continued her large and ample talk. "They sent me a message this morning," she said, as she ate, "and ordered me to come over and make their excuses and set things right. Just like boys! Give me some sherry, John Thomas. I shall scold them well, I promise you, when they come back—upsetting poor Ada's nerves, and turning the house upside down like this. I don't know what Ada would have done without you, Mrs. Mulgrave; and I hear you had their stable-men, trainers, or whatever they call them, to puzzle you too?"

"Yes," I said, struck dumb with wonder. Was all this an invention, or was she herself deceived? Poor Ada sat with her eyes cast down, and never spoke except in monosyllables; she could scarcely raise to her lips the wine which her mother-in-law made her swallow. I could not but admire the energy and determination of the woman. But at the same time she bewildered me, as she sat eating and drinking, with her elbow on the table and her rich lace mantle sweeping over the white table-cloth,

conversing in this confident way. To meet her eyes, which had not a shade of timidity or doubt about them, and see her evident comfort and enjoyment, and believe she was telling a downright lie, was almost more than was possible. "I did not know Mr. Gerald was a racing man," I faltered, not knowing what to say.

"Oh, yes, he is on the turf," said Mrs. Gresham, shrugging her shoulders; "he is on everything that don't pay. That boy has been a nuisance all his life. Not that there is anything bad about him; but he's fashionable, you know, and we are known to be rich, and everybody gives him his own way; and Harry's such a good brother——" said the rash woman all at once, to show how much at her ease she was. But this was taking a step too much. Ada could bear it no longer. There was a sudden sound of choking sobs, and then she sprang from the table. The strain had gone too far.

"I hear baby crying; I must go to baby," she sobbed; and rushed from the room without any regard to appearances. Even Mrs. Gresham, self-possessed as she was, had gone too far for her own strength. Her lip quivered, in spite of herself. She looked steadily down, and crumbled the bread before her in her strong agitated fingers. Then she gave a little laugh, which was not much less significant than tears.

"Poor little Ada," she said, "she can't bear to be crossed. She has had such a happy life, when anything goes contrary it puts her out." Perhaps it was the quivering of her own lip that brought back her vernacular. And then we began to discuss the ball as if nothing had happened. Her husband came in while we were talking, and shrugged his shoulders and muttered disapprobation, but she took no notice. She must have been aware that I knew all; and yet she thought she could bewilder me still.

I went home shortly after, grieved and disgusted and sick at heart, remembering all the wicked stories people tell of mercantile dishonesty, of false bankruptcies, and downright robberies, and the culprits who escape and live in wealth and comfort abroad. This was how it was to be in the case of Harry Gresham. His wife had her settlement, and would go to him, and they would be rich and well off, though he had as good as stolen his neighbour's property and squandered it away. Of course, I did not know all the particulars then; and I had got to be fond of these young people. I knew very well that Harry was not wicked, and that his little wife was both innocent and good. When one reads such stories in the papers, one says, "Wretches!" and thinks no more of it. But these two were not wretches, and I was fond of them, and it made me sick at heart. I went upstairs and shut myself into my own room, not being able to see visitors or to hear all the comment that, without doubt, was going on. But it did not mend matters when I saw from my window Mrs. Gresham driving past, lying back in her carriage, sweeping along swift as two superb horses could carry her, with her little old husband in the corner by her side, and a smile on her face, ready to wave her hand in gracious recogni-

tion of anyone she knew. She was like a queen coming among us, rather than the mother of a man who had fled in darkness and shame. I never despised poor Mrs. Stoke or thought less of her for Everard's downfall, but I felt scorn and disgust rise in my heart when these people passed my door; though Mrs. Gresham, too, was her son's champion in her own worldly way.

Some hours later Ada sent me a few anxious pleading words, begging me to go to her. I found her in the avenue, concealing herself among the trees; though it was a warm summer day she was cold and shivering. I do not know any word that can express her pallor. It was not the whiteness of death, but of agonized and miserable life, palpitating in every nerve and straining every faculty.

"Hush!" she said. "Don't go to the house—I can't bear it—I am watching for him—here!"

"Is he coming back?" I cried, in terror.

"I do not know; I can't tell where he is, or where he is going!" cried poor Ada, grasping my arm; "but if he should come back he would be taken. The house is watched. Did you not see that old man sitting under the hedge? There are people everywhere about watching for my Harry; and they tell me I am to stay quiet and take no notice. I think I will die—I wish I could die!"

"No, my darling!" I said, crying over her. "Tell me what it is? Did they bring you no comfort? He will not come back to be taken. There is no fear. Did they not tell you what it means?"

"They told me," cried Ada, with a violent colour flushing over her face, "that I was to keep my money to myself, and not to pay back that—that—what he has taken! It is true; he has taken some money that was not his, and lost it; but he meant to pay it back again, Mrs. Mulgrave. We were so rich; he knew he could pay it all back. And now he has lost everything and can't pay it. And they will put him in prison. Oh, I wish he had died! I wish we had all died," cried Ada, "rather than this—rather than to feel what I do to-day!"

"My dear," I cried, "don't say so; we cannot die when we please. It is a terrible misfortune; but when he did not mean it—"

Great tears rushed to Ada's eyes. "He did not mean *that*," she said; "but I think he meant me to keep my money and live on it. Oh, what shall I do? They say I will be wicked if I give it up. I will work for him with all my heart. But I cannot go on living like this, and keep what is not mine. If your husband had done it, Mrs. Mulgrave—don't be angry with me—would not you have sold the cottage and given up everything? And what am I to do?"

"You must come in and rest," I said. "Never mind what they said to you. You must do what is right, Ada, and Gerald will stand by you. He will know how to do it. Come in now and rest."

"Ah, Gerald!" cried the poor child, and then she leant on my shoulder and cried. The moment she heard even the name of one man

whom she could trust, her strength broke down. "Gerald will know how to do it!" she said, faintly, as I led her in, and tried to smile at me. It was a gleam of comfort in the darkness. I cannot describe the period of terrible suspense that followed. I stayed with her, making no pretence of going back to my own house; though when the story came to be in the newspapers all my friends wrote letters to me and disapproved of my conduct. I did not care; one knows one's own duties better than one's friends do. The day after the ball hosts of cards, and civil messages, and "kind inquiries" had poured upon Ada; but after that they totally stopped. Not a carriage nor a visitor came near the house for the three last days. The world fell away from us and left the poor young creature to bear her burden alone. In the midst of all this real suffering there was one little incident which affected my temper more than all the rest. Old Thomas Lee, an old man from the village, who used to carry little wares about in a basket, and made his living by it, had taken his place under the hedge close to the gates of Dinglewood, and sat there watching all day long. Of course, he was paid to do it, and he was very poor. But I don't think the money he earned so has done him much good. I have never given a penny or a penny's worth to old Lee since that time. Many a sixpence poor Harry had tossed at him as he passed in his Yankee waggon every morning to the station. I had no patience with the wretched old spy. He had the assurance to take off his hat to me when I went into the house he was watching, and I confess that it was with a struggle, no later back than last winter, when the season was at its coldest, that I consented to give him a little help for his children's sake.

It was nearly a week before we got any letters, and all these long days we watched and waited, glad when every night fell, trembling when every morning rose; watching at the windows, at the gates, everywhere that a peep could be had of the white, blinding, vacant road. Every time the postman went round the Green our hearts grew faint with anxiety: once or twice when the telegraph boy appeared, even I, though I was but a spectator, felt the life die out of my heart. But at last this period of dreadful uncertainty came to a close. It was in the morning, by the first post, that the letters came. They were under cover to me, and I took them to Ada's room while she was still sleeping the restless sleep of exhaustion. She sprang up in a moment and caught at her husband's letter as if it had been a revelation from heaven. The happiest news in the world could not have been more eagerly received. He was safe. He had put the Channel between him and his pursuers. There was no need for further watching. The relief in itself was a positive happiness. Ten days ago it would have been heartrending to think of Harry Gresham as an escaped criminal, as an exile, for whom return was impossible; disgraced, nameless, and without hope. To-day the news was joyful news: he was safe, if nothing more.

Then for the first time Ada indulged in the luxury of tears—tears that came in floods, like those thunder-showers which ease the hearts of the

young. She threw herself on my neck and kissed me again and again. "I should have died but for you : I had no mamma of my own to go to," she sobbed, like a baby. Perhaps the thing that made these childish words go to my heart was that I had no child.

Of course I expected, and everybody will expect, that after this excitement she should have fallen ill. But she did not. On the contrary, she came downstairs with me, and ate (almost for the first time) and smiled, and played with her children, while I stood by with the feeling that I ought to have a brain fever myself, if Ada would not see what was expected of her. But as the day ran on, she became grave, and ever graver. She said little, and it was mostly about Gerald; how he must come home and manage everything; how she was determined to take no rest, to listen to no argument, till the money was paid. I went home to my own house that evening, and she made no opposition. I said good-night to her in the nursery where she was sitting close by her little girl's bed. She was crying, poor child, but I did not wonder at that; and nurse was a kind woman, and very attentive to her little mistress. I went round to the terrace and out by the garden, without having any particular reason for it. But before I reached the gate some one came tripping after me, and looking round I saw it was Ada, wrapped in a great waterproof cloak. She was going to walk home with me, she said. I resisted her coming, but it was in vain. It was a warm balmy night, and I could not understand why she should have put on her great cloak. But as soon as she was safe in my little drawing-room, her secret came out. Then she opened her mantle with a smile. On one of her arms hung a bundle; on the other rested her sleeping baby. She laughed at my amaze, and then she cried. "I am going to Harry," she said; and held her child closer, and dried her eyes and sat immovable, ready to listen to anything I chose to say. Heaven knows I said everything I could think of—of the folly of it, of her foolhardiness; that she was totally unable for the task she was putting on herself; that Harry had Gerald, and could do without her. All which she listened to with a smile, impenetrable, and not to be moved. When I had come to an end of my arguments, she stretched out to me the arm on which the bundle hung, and drew me close to her and kissed me again. "You are going to give me some biscuits and a little flask of wine," she said, "to put in my pocket. I have one of the housekeeper's old-fashioned pockets, which is of some use. And then you must say 'God bless you,' and let me go."

"God bless you, my poor child," I said, overcome; "but you must not go; little Ada too—"

Then her eyes filled with tears. "My pretty darling!" she said; "but grandmamma will take her to Bishop's Hope. It is only baby that cannot live without his mother. Baby and Harry. What is Gerald? I know he wants *me*."

"But he can wait," I cried; "and you so young, so delicate, so unused to any trouble!"

"I can carry my child perfectly," said Ada. "I never was delicate. There is a train at eleven, down to Southampton. I found it out in the book: and after that I know my way. I am a very good traveller," she said, with a smile, "and Gerald must come to settle everything. Give me the biscuits, dear Mrs. Mulgrave, and kiss me and let me go."

And it had to be so, though I pleaded with her till I was hoarse. When the moment came, I put on my cloak too and walked with her, late as it was, a mile off to the new station, which both she and I had thought too far for walking in the cheerful daylight. I carried the bundle, while she carried the baby, and we looked like two homely countrywomen trudging home. She drew her hood over her head while she got her ticket, and I waited outside. Then in the dark I kissed her for the last time. I could not speak, nor did she. She took the bundle from me, grasping my hand with her soft fingers almost as a man might have done; and we kissed each other with anguish, like people who part for ever. And I have never seen her again.

As I came back, frightened and miserable, all by myself along the moonlit road, I had to pass the Stokes' cottage. Lottie was leaning out of the window, though it was now nearly midnight, with her face, all pallid in the moon, turned towards Dinglewood. I could scarcely keep myself from calling to her. She did not know what we had been doing, yet her heart had been with us that night.

CHAPTER V.

I WILL not describe the tumult that arose when it was discovered. The servants rushed over to me in a body, and I suggested that they should send for Mrs. Gresham; and that great lady came, in all her splendour, and took little Ada away, and gave everybody "notice." Then great bills of the auction covered the pillars at the gate, and strangers came in heaps to see the place. In a month everything had melted away like a tale that is told. The Greshams and their wealth and their liberality and their good-nature fell out of the very recollection of the people on the Green, along with the damask and the gilding and the flowers, the fine carriages and the powdered footmen. Everything connected with them disappeared. The new tenant altered the house a second time; and everything that could recall the handsome young couple and their lavish ways was cleared away. Of course there was nothing else talked of for a long time after. Everybody had his or her account of the whole business: some said poor Harry met his pursuers in the field close to the river, and that Gerald and he fought with them, and left them all but dead in the grass; some said that Ada and I defended the house, and would not let them in; and there were countless romances about the escape and Ada's secret following after. The imagination of my neighbours made many a fancy

sketch of that last scene ; but never hit upon anything so touching as my last glimpse of her, with her baby under her cloak, going into the train. I held my peace, and let them speak. She had been as my own child for about a week, just a week of our lives ; before that she was a common acquaintance, after it a stranger ; but I could not let any vulgar tongues meddle with our relationship or her story in that sacred time.

And after a while the tale fell into oblivion, as every story does if we can but wait long enough. People forgot about the Greshams ; sometimes a stranger would observe the name of Mr. Gresham, of Bishop's Hope, in some list of county charities, and would ask if he was a Gresham of Greshambury, or if he was any connection of the man who ran away. Of course, at the time, it was in all the newspapers. He had taken money that somebody had trusted him with and used it in his speculations. Of course he meant to pay it back ; but then a great crash came. The men say there was no excuse for him, and I can see that there is no excuse ; but he never meant it, poor Harry ! And then the papers were full of further incidents, which were more unusual than Harry's sin or his flight. The *Times* devoted a leading article to it which everybody read, holding Mrs. Gresham up to the applause of the world. Ada gave up her settlement and all her own fortune, and "one of his brothers," the papers said, came forward, too, and most of the money was paid back. But Harry, poor fellow, disappeared. He was as if he had gone down at sea. His name and every sign of his life went out of knowledge—waves of forgetfulness, desertion, exile closed over them. And at Dinglewood they were never either seen or heard of again.

As long as it continued to be in the papers, Lottie Stoke kept in a very excited state. She came to me for ever finding out every word that was printed about it, dwelling on everything. That evening when the article appeared about Mrs. Gresham's heroic abandonment of her fortune, and about "one of his brothers," Lottie came with her eyes lighted up like windows in an illumination, and her whole frame trembling with excitement. She read it all to me, and listened to my comments, and clasped my hand in hers when I cried out, "That must be Gerald." She sat on the footstool, holding the paper, and gazed up into my face with her eyes like lamps. "Then I do not mind !" she cried, and buried her face in her hands and sobbed aloud. And I did not ask her what she meant—I had not the heart.

It was quite years after before I heard anything more of the Greshams, and then it was by way of Lottie Stoke that the news came. She had grown thinner and more worn year by year. She had not had the spirits to go out, and they were so poor that they could have no society at home. And by degrees Lottie came to be considered a little old, which is a dreadful business for an unmarried girl when her people are so poor. Mrs. Stoke did not upbraid her ; but still, it may be guessed what her feelings were. But, fortunately, as Lottie sank into the background, Lucy came to the front. She was pretty, and fresh and gay, and more

popular than her sister had ever been. And, by-and-by, she did fulfil the grand object of existence, and married well. When Lucy told me of her engagement she was very angry with her sister.

"She says, how can I do it? She asks me if I have forgotten Gerald Gresham?" cried Lucy. "As if I ever cared for Gerald Gresham; or as if anybody would marry him after—— I shall think she cared for him herself if she keeps going on."

"Lucy!" said Lottie, flushing crimson under her hollow eyes. Lucy, for her part, was as bright as happiness, indignation, high health, and undiminished spirits could make her. But, for my part, I liked her sister best.

"Well!" she said; "and I do think it. You *would* lecture me about him when we were only having a little fun. As if I ever cared for him! And I don't believe," cried Lucy, courageously, "that he ever cared for me."

Her sister kissed her, though she had been so angry. "Don't let us quarrel now when we are going to part," she said, with a strange quiver in her voice. Perhaps the child was right; perhaps he had never cared for her, though Lottie and I both thought he did. He cared for neither of them, probably; and there was no chance that he would ever come back to Dinglewood, or show himself where his family had been so disgraced. But yet Lottie brightened up a little after that day, I can scarcely tell why.

Some time after she went on a visit to London, in the season; and it was very hard work for her, I know, to get some dresses to go in; for she never would have any of Lucy's presents. She was six weeks away, and she came back looking a different creature. The very first morning after her return she came over to me, glowing with something to tell. "Who do you think I met?" she said, with a soft flush trembling over her face. Her look brought one name irresistibly to my mind. But I would not reopen that old business; I shook my head, and said I did not know.

"Why, Gerald Gresham!" she cried. "It is true, Mrs. Mulgrave; he is painting pictures now—painting, you understand, not for his pleasure, but like a trade. And he told me about Ada and poor Harry. They have gone to America. It has changed him very much, even his looks; and instead of being rich, he is poor."

"Ah," I said, "'one of his brothers.' You always said it was Gerald," but I was not prepared for what was to come next.

"Did not I?" cried Lottie, triumphant; "I knew it was him." And then she paused a little, and sat silent, in a happy brooding over something that was to come. "And I think she was right," said Lottie, softly. "He had not been thinking of Lucy; it was not Lucy for whom he cared."

I took her hands into my own, perceiving what she meant; and then all at once Lottie fell a crying, but not for sorrow.

"That was how I always deceived myself," she said. "It was so

base of me at first ; I wanted to marry him because he was rich. And then I thought it was Lucy he liked ; she was so young and so pretty." Then she made a long pause, and put my hands upon her hot cheeks, and covered herself with them. "Your hands are so cool," she said, "and so soft and kind. I am going to marry him now, Mrs. Mulgrave, and he is poor."

This is a kind of postscript to the story, but still it is so connected with it that it is impossible to tell the one without the other. We were much agitated about this marriage on the Green. If Gerald Gresham had been rich, it would have been a different matter. But a stockbroker's son, with disgrace in the family, and poor ! I don't know any one who was not sorry for Mrs. Stoke under this unexpected blow. But I was not sorry for Lottie. Gerald, naturally, is not fond of coming to the Green, but I see them sometimes in London, and I think they suit each other. He tells me of poor Ada every time I see him. And I believe old Mr. Gresham is very indignant at Harry's want of spirit in not beginning again, and at Ada for giving up her settlement, and at Gerald for expending his money to help them—"A pack of fools," says the old man. But of course they will all, even the shipwrecked family in America, get something from him when he dies. As for the mother, I met her once at Lottie's door, getting into her fine carriage with the bays, and she was very affable to me. In her opinion it was all Ada's fault. "What can a man do with an extravagant wife who spends all his money before it is made ?" she said as she got into her carriage ; and I found it a little hard to keep my temper. But the Greshams and their story, and all the brief splendours of Dinglewood are almost forgotten by this time by everybody on the Green.

“The English are not a Musical People.”

ONE of our humourists has said that a quotation is never so apt as when it is misapplied ; so I trust to prove the perfect aptitude of the quotation from common prejudice which heads these remarks, by showing its utter misapplication.

If what is common and false be vulgar, then certainly the disbelief in the musical capacities of the English is a vulgar prejudice ; and it is none the less so because it is the most cordially entertained by a class of the population which as much supposes itself, as it is generally believed to be, superior to vulgarity. With such high example for the direct perversion of truth against ourselves, it is as little to be wondered at as it is much to be deplored, that musicians themselves too often pander to the prevalent folly by assuming foreign names or affecting foreign titles. It is their fashion, indeed, to give a foreign termination to words used in connection with music itself ; thus the list of pieces to be performed in a concert is styled by them a *programme* ; whereas good writers of our language, who apply the term to other than musical uses, spell it as they spell all words derived from the same Greek root. If a musician inverted the letters of his name so as to make another word, would he call such redistribution an *anagramme* ? If he illustrated any theoretical point by a pictorial figure, would he name this a *diagramme* ? Were a witty couplet written about music, would it be styled an *epigramme* ? Would the cypher formed of a musician's initials be called a *monogramme* ? If a despatch announced a singer's sudden indisposition, should it be named a *telegramme* ? I am told, however, that we have taken the idea of concert bills, and, consequently, the word which defines them, from the French ; and that is why we spell it in the French way. Well, we took India, or a large part of it, from the French, but do not call it l'Inde.

The truth is, however, that the prejudice against which English musicianship has to contend springs from domestic mistrust, more than from foreign depreciation, of our native capacity to love and practise the art. It dates, at earliest, within these last hundred and fifty years, to prove which I will adduce some pertinent facts from all periods of English history.

The genus Englishman is a compound of Briton, Saxon, and Dane. It would be easy to exemplify, with anecdotes amusing as authentic, the very strong musical bent and musical ability of each of these three components of our nation, and thus to prove that the art love of the English people was inherent in us from the races of which we are amalgamated. I will forbear the narration of many of these stories, but must recount one

to show that our forefathers, prior to the Conquest, had musical proficiency far above the composition and performance of a melody to such an accompaniment as would suffice to keep the voice in tune, which was the utmost attainment in musical art of the classic Greeks and Romans, and of all the South European nations until long beyond the period now under consideration. In the middle of the eleventh century, Hereward, the son of Godiva, whose noble devotion rescued the people of Coventry from their lord's oppression,—Hereward, the last of the English who forcibly resisted the tyranny of our Norman invaders,—presented himself with his two nephews at the bridal feast of the daughter of a Cornish king, where they were received in the capacity of minstrels, which character they supported by singing sometimes singly, and sometimes in harmony of three parts, which latter, the chronicle especially states, was according to the custom of the race that then peopled our eastern counties. Here is distinct evidence, which might easily be developed into far greater amplitude, that harmony, the art of musical combination, which is the basis of all musical construction, was known and practised and enjoyed here, some hundreds of years before the greatly vaunted Roman school appropriated the art of descant, or counterpoint, which art the Church indeed derived from the unschooled practice of our Northern laity. In the latter part of the twelfth century, this practice of polyphony was certainly current as much among the people of Wales as among those of the north-east of our island; and there is good ground to assume that harmony must have been commonly familiar in England when those stalwart Danes, the Vikings of the sea and lords of the shell, masters alike of sword and song, first set foot upon our shores. Further, what seems to have been the intuitive art use of the untaught people in the misty age of tradition prior to the last eight hundred years, has, in spite of the neglect of popular education, preserved itself to the present day, when, in Essex and in Wales,—the extremes of east and west,—the country folk rejoice themselves at harvest-tide and other seasons of festive meeting, with songs in three-part harmony, which, if it may not pass the ordeal of a contrapuntist's scrutiny, clearly indicates the aptitude of the singers and the inclination of the listeners.

In the Norman policy of denationalising the people, the attempt is conspicuously characteristic of Abbot Thurstan to impose, by force of arms, the form of chant devised by Guillaume of Fécamp, upon the use of the English clergy. It was impossible, however, to deracinate the love of music, which was firmly rooted in the native heart, and had spread its winged seeds from generation to generation of the native people.

Accordingly, when Thomas à Beckett in 1159, as High Chancellor of England, went to negotiate the marriage of Henry the Second's son with the daughter of Louis VII., and desired, for the success of his mission, to display to the utmost the importance in wealth and civilization of his own country, he entered Paris in a procession that was headed by two hundred and fifty boys, who were arranged in groups that each sang pieces in harmony of three parts, which, the record expressly notes, was after the

English manner, and, till then, unheard in France. Yet again, in 1510, the lapse of ages had not changed the usage at home, nor advanced foreign musicianship to the capability of coping with ours; for then Thomas Cromwell, once Wolsey's secretary, and subsequently Earl of Essex, went to Rome to procure from Julius II. a renewal of some ecclesiastical privileges for the town of Boston, and sought to propitiate the pope with the singing of Three-men's Songs, with the novelty and beauty of which Julius was so well pleased that he received the Englishman with favour, and readily granted his suit.

It has been pretended that all historical allusions to the musical proclivities of our countrymen refer at best to their relish for simple tunes and their preference of the vulgarest. Whoever has put forth this proposition, which has no foundation but in the fancy of him that has advanced it, must have taken his own incapacity as the standard of the nation, and described the people as he knew himself. I have shown that by intuition and by cultivation the English were for long in advance of Continental nations in the province of harmony. It is now to note how also this country was before the rest of the world in contrapuntal elaborations. It would be prolix here to cite the many concurrent statements of writers of successive periods as to the high advancement of musical art in England, and as to the eminence of English artists in the early stages of its progress—statements that have been overlooked or misquoted by some musical historians, and are therefore unknown to readers whose researches in art history are limited to Burney and Hawkins. I may opportunely adduce, however, the Six-men's Songs,—“Sumer is icumen in,”—as a testimony of the state of music here at a period when there is no sign of its equal advancement in any other land. The date of the MS. of this remarkable specimen of scholarship, and, I will aver, of such melodious fluency as critics call inspiration, was long disputed; but I believe that the best judges now agree in assigning it, from internal and collateral evidence, to 1250. Now to speak technically—and I must be technical to be true—this piece is a canon for four in one in the unison, with a foot or burden also of canonic construction for yet two more voices; and as such, while some grammatical irregularities cannot be denied in it, it presents an amount of twofold complication that is wonderful for its age, and remarkable for any age.

Although we commonly give to the Church the credit of all the scholarship of the Middle Ages, she ever took Time by the fetlock in his musical course, lagging always at the heels of the laity in every step of the art's career. One evidence of this, among countless others, is, that in the earliest MS. of the composition I have been describing, the words of a Latin hymn are adapted to the notes; the tokens of which adaptation are that the Latin text is written under the English, and that, having no words for the burden, it is insufficient for the music. Ecclesiastical appropriation of this piece is of a parity with the practice of Thomas, Archbishop of York, in the eleventh century, who adapted devotional verses to every

secular tune that became popular ; and with the practice of Richard, Bishop of Ossory, in the fourteenth century, of whose exercises in Latinity to this effect several specimens are extant.

The *Tournament of Tottenham*, a metrical romance of the reign of Edward II., shows in the following allusion—

In all the corners of the house
Was melody delicious
Of Six-men's Songs—

that "Sumer is icumen in," or other pieces of similarly complicated structure, had general acceptance in the first years of the fourteenth century. It is not to be supposed, however, that in those remote times, any more than at present, six singers were always at hand for the performance of a piece of such extensive requirements. Were other proof failing, the likelihood of the case would furnish ample evidence of this canon having been sung, as very frequently were the catches of more recent days, by a single voice, either with or without instrumental accompaniment ; and thus it is to be classed among our national melodies. This brings us to the consideration of the national melodies of our British Isles, and particularly of England, because, while we have acknowledged the existence and the beauty of the tunes of our sister nations, it has been our grievous fashion to ignore those which are peculiarly our own. It is not here minutely to define the term "national melody," whose general signification is, I believe, generally understood, if doctors sometimes differ as to its special application. Enough to premise that I refer by it to tunes which are sung by the people for the tunes' sake, who find in them an utterance of their own humours, tempers, and emotions, and who love them for their truthfulness to this expression, regardless of their authorships, or even of their ever having been written down, and learning them commonly from person to person, from mouth to ear. My quest has been constantly in vain for such melodies belonging to southern nations, and even in Germany, except the Choral tunes of the Lutheran Church, I can meet with but few that seem not, like the melodies of Italy and Spain, to be extempore variations upon some fixed routine of harmony, which are as quickly forgotten as they are easily remembered, and which bear no intrinsic or recorded proof of more than two generations' endurance. The wondrously beautiful melodies of Ireland, those few airs that are genuinely Scotch, and some admirable Welsh tunes, tell all their own tale of loveliness to the world, and exact its universal recognition. It is our English fortune, and it should be our English pride, to possess a greater number of national tunes, of a greater diversity of character and expression, than any nation upon earth ; and this, I maintain, more than all the evidences which have too long been sealed of musical scholarship in this country, more than the long list of once respected native-born musicians, proves that the English people have music truly at heart, and only need quittance from the prejudice which has depressed them during the last century and a half to enable them to resume their pristine national musical character.

The Fayrfax MS. shows the advanced state of part-writing here at the time of the Tudor accession; and, by necessary inference, indicates the state of taste to which such writing could be offered. It comprises vocal pieces by several composers, mostly of a pastoral character, which are remarkable for general fitness to the nature of the words, for melodious grace and even modernness of phraseology, for clearness and freedom of rhythm, and for quite as few aberrations from the strict path of musical syntax as any contemporaneous productions that have come within my reach.

The pieces of concerted vocal music designated "King Henry's Mirth," and the record of Sir Peter Carew's great favour with "bluff King Hal" on account of his effective participation with the monarch himself in their performance, prove to us what kind of pastime diverted the court of England at the beginning of the sixteenth century, before the King's conjugal perplexities turned his thoughts from healthful exercise and social recreation to matters in Church and State for which some may think he was less naturally qualified. These pieces are defined as *Threemen's* or *Freemen's* Songs, which definition apparently refers them, in shape if not in substance, to the days of the bold Hereward and his two nephews,—I mean that if these actual pieces were not sung by the merry men of the Fens before the coming of William the Conqueror, they are in the form and of the character of the songs of that era—a supposition resulting from a comparison of the music with the remarks of our earliest poets and writers on the people's customs. The word *Free-men* has, of a truth, puzzled many an inquirer into its signification: some have supposed it a corruption of the compound *Three-men*; some, to denote the free or jovial character of the men who took pleasure in such music; and one venture-some eighteenth-century editor printed a few specimens with the name of *Freemen* as that of their composer. So far as they speak for themselves, it can only be adduced that they are all for three male voices, and all of a hilarious character.

That Henry VIII. studied music was essential to his youthful preparation for the archbishopric of Canterbury. It was then essential for the Primate, as for all Church ministers under him, thoroughly to understand music; whereas it now suffices that the Archbishop of Canterbury confers musical degrees. That Henry prosecuted this study after his brother's death had changed his destiny and removed the necessity for his musical scholarship, and that he attained to high productive and executive skill, shows the bent of his inclination, and throws a strong light upon the taste for art in his time. A reflector of this light, which certainly augments its distinctness, is the fact that the earliest publication of secular music in this country, bearing date 1580, is a collection of concerted pieces by various composers, printed in separate vocal parts. The printing in separate parts is a silent but resistless testimony to those parts having been required for performance; and the indispensability of the accomplishment of sight-singing to a gentleman is significantly shown in

Skelton's humorous poem of *Bouge at Court*, wherein the hero thus implores for instruction :—

Wolde to God it wolde please you some day
A balade boke before me for to laye,
And lerne me for to syngre, re, mi, fa, sol,
And when I fayle, bobbe me on the noll.

The continuance of the practice in courtly society of choral singing is attested by the multiplication of works to feed the general desire. Few are now familiar with the compositions in this class of Elizabeth's early days; but one such example as the choral song, "In going to my naked bed," of Richard Edwards, certifies the poetical feeling and technical proficiency of the artists, and the appreciative and executive power of the amateurs, to have been of a very high order at this epoch.

Detractors of our native musicianship, who have been unable to dispute the sterling merit of our madrigal composers, have sought to trace this to the example of Italian works imported into England. Dates are dull witnesses, but they cannot be suborned, and their evidence outweighs any amount of speculative argument. A merchant named Young brought over some choice specimens of Italian art, which, with translated words, he published under the collective title of *Musica Transalpina*, in 1578; the piece I have named (because of frequent occurrence at modern concerts), and very many of the same structure by Byrd and other masters, were written here before the date of Young's importation. Unquestionably music progressed among the English, as it did among the Flemish and Italian composers, and the works produced in the seventeenth century were consequently far in advance of those written before the middle of the sixteenth: the natural course of art development is then the cause of the remarkable eminence of Morley, Dowland, Weelkes, Wilbye, Gibbons, and their compatriots, among the European musicians of the age; the highest efforts of their fellow-artists beyond seas may have stimulated these men's endeavour, but were not the pattern by which they wrought. On the other hand, how much may foreigners have learned from our countrymen when John Cooper and Peter Phillips, under the Italianised names of Giovanni Coperario and Pietro Filippi, were among the best-esteemed members of the Roman school; when the famous Dr. John Bull closed his life in Amsterdam; when the compositions of John Dowland were printed in eight Continental cities during the life of the author, and when the services of this worthy were besought by Christian IV. of Denmark of our James I., who was, according to Fuller, "unwillingly willing" that the distinguished composer and Lutenist should enrich with his presence a foreign court.

In Thomas Morley's *Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music*, 1597, we find evidence of the same necessity for musicianship in gentle society that is proved, by the quaint passage I have given from Skelton, to have prevailed three reigns earlier. The book is framed in dialogues

between a country gentleman and his court friend, to whom he relates his disgrace in being unable to sing a part when the music books were handed round to the company in which he was recently present, and who undertakes therefore to induct him into the mysteries of the art, and relieve him thus from future embarrassment—the sequel being the course of instruction.

To sing from book was, in the olden time, necessary among the educated class, who had accordingly their madrigals, ballets, and part-songs; but though an essential of good breeding, its practice was not the peculiar privilege of the wealthy. Let the people's habit attest this, of singing not only our beautiful national tunes, but compositions of involved construction. Such is the Roundel or Round, called also Catch when the words have a comic tendency. Thus, when Sir John Norman, in 1453, first broke through the primal custom of a land procession along the strand of the river and through the village of Charing to take his oaths at Westminster as Lord Mayor of London, the Thames watermen had their roundel to celebrate his honouring their element with his civic pageant. "Row the boat, Norman," was sung on stream and on shore by any three men of the water, or of the land, who met in good-fellowship from that time forward. This piece is the type of a countless species, and we have best reason for believing that the singing of rounds and catches was, for ages, the recreation of rustic labourers, town artisans, and servants of all denominations.

While such was the musicality of gentle and simple, the institutions for the care and culture of the art in England, and the public and private appointments with the duties these entailed for its practitioners, are quite as worthy of note, and quite as evidential of the high esteem accorded to music and musicians.

In chivalric times, the order of minstrels had its *Rex Ministrallorum*, as that of heralds its *Rex Heraldorum*, and the one functionary commanded neither higher respect nor higher reward than the other—the Herald King-at-Arms than the King of the Minstrels. The Herald's College perpetuates to the present day the offices of its order, and implies their value to men and morals; the minstrels' fraternity has passed out of being. Let fond imagination trust that the preservation of the former makes up in the welfare of society for the latter's extinction.

England is the only country that recognizes the culture of music in its universities of learning. Alfred instituted a musical professorship in his foundation of the University of Oxford in 866, the first representative of which was John of St. David's, and the latest is Sir F. A. G. Ouseley, who now fills the time-honoured chair. The earliest graduate in this faculty whose title has been traced is Henry Habington, created Bachelor of Music at Cambridge, in 1463; and any one knows how frequently musical degrees have been conferred by our universities since his time. The Doctorate, be it remembered, received by Spohr, by Mendelssohn, and by Schumann, from German universities, is a degree in philosophy

complimentarily bestowed upon men eminent in either of the arts, music, poetry, or painting.

Every city had, of old, its band of musicians. We moderns have still our Waits, whose assumed denomination is their excuse for disturbing our sleep on winter nights and appealing for Christmas-boxes on St. Stephen's morning. Their braying upon cornets and ophicleides of Italian opera airs and Christy Minstrel melodies is the melancholy remnant of the ancient city custom for the waites, or watch, to pass on their rounds with harmonious piping, or with the sweet sound of song breathing a benison on the sleepers. Not only in the royal court, but in the house of every nobleman and gentleman, there was, down to the Stuart times, an appointed bard of musicians, whose functions were to compose and to perform for the diversion of their lord and his guests. The small potentates of Germany have adopted this practice, each of whom maintains his Kapellmeister with an ample artist band; and it is not the only practice of our forefathers for the honour and promotion of music which has been adopted in the Fatherland from the precedent of the Mother country, Financialists represent that the pecuniary means of our present nobility surpass those of their ancestors, and exceed those of the small German potentates; thus it seems that, in respect to the support of musical art, the more means the less meaning.

Thus far I have spoken of music in England when chroniclers and poets described the land as "fair," and accounted the people as "merry." We come now to the days when England was first called "Old," and when, with her acknowledgment of age, she put on sad-colour. It was an eventful year, 1641, when this term, Old England, appears first to have been used in print, one-and-twenty years after our American colony of North Virginia received the name of New England, and the epithet referred not then to the positive age of the island parent so much as to the comparative youth of her Transatlantic offspring. It was in 1641 that Strafford was beheaded, and that bishops were deprived of their place in Parliament, when the King's interest and the people's were divided, and when the Civil War was ripe for bursting. The gallant, stirring, jovial song with Martin Parker's racy words, "When the King enjoys his own again," is cited by after writers as "a tune of '41;" and this song did signal service in keeping alive the spirit of the Cavaliers so long as they had any king to fight for, and it aided not a little towards the bringing back of his son; nay, when James III. twice strove to dispossess the Hanoverians of the English throne, this notable ditty was as a watchword among his partisans, and it is thus a more veritable Jacobite relic than all the Scottish "Charlie" songs that have been fabricated since the final expulsion of the Stuarts. The old troublous times are well pictured in Scott's *Woodstock*, where he makes the rattling, reckless Wildrake—"a true tantiviter"—constantly attune his loyalty to the strains of this memorable melody.

It has been falsely alleged that the decadence of music in this country

is due to the Puritan influence. It is under the Commonwealth, however, that several facts have date which bear strongly upon the development at least of the secular branch of the art.

In 1651, Playford published the first edition of the *Dancing Master*, which is the earliest printed collection of our dance tunes, with descriptions of the figures: a work of infinite importance, since we owe to it the preservation of many of the most beautiful airs of our songs in those of the dances that are named after them. Hence, it is clear that there was dancing to very pretty tunes in the days of the Roundheads.

In 1652, the same publisher issued his *Select Ayres and Dialogues*, which collection of vocal music, by various composers, comprises the first two pieces to which the definition "Glee" was ever applied. I pause upon this, because the glee is claimed as a class of composition peculiar to England, and because the claim is even admitted by those most forward to deny our musical pretensions. The embryo of the glee is discernible in the Three-men's Songs already often alluded to, and in the pieces contained in the Fayrfax MS. The signification of its title is, however, expressly shown in the two examples to which this is first applied, they both being of a convivial, mirthful, literally gleesome character, in theme and treatment. Of one of these, "Bring in the cold chine," since it heads a class that is allowed to be specially English, it may be interesting to note that its composer was Jack Wilson, the original personator of Amiens in *As You Like It*, and probably the author of the original music of his songs, the boon companion of Ben Jonson at his Apollo Club, and afterwards doctor and professor of music in the University of Oxford.

In 1656, at Rutland House, in Aldersgate Street, Sir William Davenant gave the first public performance of an English opera. This was five years prior to the patent of the Academie Royale de Musique, which licensed the first performance of French operas; and twenty-two years before the production of Thiel's *Adam und Eva*, which was the first opera publicly performed in Germany. The work is called *The Siege of Rhodes*, and the book of the words is extant, but not so the music, which was the composition of several masters. It is equally remarkable, since quite as important, that the character of Ianthé in this opera was sustained by Mrs. Henry Colman, who was the first female that ever performed in public in this country. We owe, then, to Puritan times the perpetuation of our oldest national melodies, and the origination of our glee, our opera, and our pleasurable privilege of hearing female singers.

The Protector himself proved most strongly his own musical tendencies. He engaged John Hingston, a musician of good esteem, to teach his daughters, and assigned him a pension of 100*l.* a year, which, at the different value of money, was then worth three times its present amount. He frequented musical parties at Hingston's house, at one or more of which Sir Roger l'Estrange assisted upon the bass viol, who, in consequence of his participation in these performances, was nicknamed "Old

Noll's Fiddler" by his Royalist friends. Sir Roger, be it observed, who subsequently established, if not originated, public journalism in England, was greatly prejudiced after the Restoration by this cognomen and the associations that induced it. To return to Cromwell: he was, on one occasion, so much pleased with the singing of a certain James Quin, that, for the sake of this, he restored him to an Oxford scholarship of which the Commissioners had deprived him on account of his adherence to the Royal cause. Even Heath, who was engaged after the Restoration to write a calumniating biography of Cromwell—even Heath, whose corruptions are so gross that Carlyle always prefixes the epithet "Carrion" to his name—even Carrion Heath compares the subject of his vilification with "wicked Saul," who, when the evil spirit was upon him, sought to exorcise this with the charm of harmonious sounds; and states that "he respected, or at least pretended to love, all ingenious or eximious persons in any art, whom he procured to be sent or brought to him."

We now come to the period of the Restoration. Whether the exile of Charles II. be the worst subject for regret, or his return, it was at least a natural consequence of his years of residence in a foreign country that he should be imbued with foreign tastes as with foreign morals. Of the latter it boots not here to speak; of the former it may be said that his institution, registered in nursery rhyme, of "four-and-twenty fiddlers," of whom John Banister was the leader, if an imitation of the "Grands Violons" of Louis XIV., or of the "petits violons" organized to give scope to the talent of Lully, it was an imitation in form only, the substance of a royal orchestra having been an appanage of the court of England since the days of Elizabeth, if not from time immemorial. Further, though some foreign musicians were attracted hither by the King's welcome, they made no stand against the brilliant constellation of native artists who still give lustre to the age in which their genius swayed the tide of fashion. French biographers state that Cambert came to London after his reverses at home, reproduced one of his operas, and died here; but no notice of his presence has been found in English annals. Unquestionably Grabut was in England, and composed the allegorical opera of *Albion and Albanus* to Dryden's verses. We know also that Draghi and Pignani spent some years in England. But what of this knowledge? What of the certainty that a score of such Frenchmen and Italians were among us, who failed to touch the hearts of the people whom they addressed, or to stamp their impress upon the development of their art? Compare these names with that of Henry Lawes, whose brother William, also a composer, had fallen at the siege of Chester, when Charles I. wore mourning in respect for his memory and in honour of his talent; Henry Lawes, whose exquisite powers of musical expression and declamation are eulogized by Milton and Waller, and whose esteem was so high that the approved poets of the time and the young nobles who courted poetical glory were emulous of his setting music to their verses. Compare these names with that of Mathew Locke, who, though the music be lost which

he composed for Macbeth, and though the music in Macbeth be not his which is commonly accredited to him, wrote the opera of *Psyche* prior to Lully's of the same name, wrote other works for the stage, wrote for the Romanist Church as organist to the Queen, wrote vocal and instrumental music for the Chamber, and wrote glees for the people. Compare these names with that of Pelham Humphreys, whom Pepys describes as "keeping time to the music," (or, in modern phrase, conducting) at Whitehall in the year when, at the age of nineteen, he wrote the music for Dryden's spoilation of the *Tempest*, and therein proved that the lyrical art of the age was superior to the poetical. Compare these names with that of Henry Purcell, who was the greatest musician of his own age, and who, in his wonderful insight into the latest modern resources of harmony, and his delicate application of the powers of melodic expression, as far exceeded the past as he anticipated the future of his art. Not to look further, such comparison will fully account for the non-influence of Charles's foreign proclivities upon the national lyrical muse.

A brief allusion must suffice to the institution of public concerts, which were first given during this reign. Banister, before mentioned, was the originator of musical performances to which an audience paid for admission. These were held at a large room near the gate of the Temple in Whitefriars, where a curtain screened the diffident singers and players from the public, who paid to hear, but not to see them. At these concerts ale and tobacco were permitted to the audience, and they thus stand as precedents for the Music Hall entertainments that have an egregious effect on the taste of our present day. Prior to Banister's concerts, there were music-clubs held in several places—"a lane at the back of Paul's," the "Mitre Tavern," near the west front of the cathedral, and elsewhere. These were of a social nature, the members being all executants, and resembled, so far as possible, with the discrepancy of time and place, the Liedertafel at present in vogue in Germany; so that here we find another appropriation of English practice in the musical habits of our cousins-German. It is noteworthy that the members of these clubs were principally of what are now called the working-classes, since this proves that technical musicianship was still common among the people; and it is further noteworthy that persons of daintier habits and ampler means were co-members with them, since this proves that with men of musical tastes, fellowship in its gratification superseded tailors' distinctions. Lastly, let me observe that the first public room devoted specially to musical performances, without the alloy of physical refection, was opened in 1680, stood at the corner of Villiers and Duke Streets, York Buildings, Strand, where the "Griffin" public-house now occupies its site, and was the resort of music lovers of all classes. Let me prove from this, that since King Charles's time, when the custom began to decline among our nobility of maintaining each a musical establishment for his private gratifications, musical performances in concert-rooms have been accessible to the public.

The musical faith of England—and I use the word "faith" in its deepest and fullest sense—which the asperity of the Protectorate could not crush, and the frivolity of the Restoration could not dissipate, received its first shock in Queen Anne's reign, and lapsed, through indifference and scepticism, into downright infidelity, under the administration of that good lady's Hanoverian successors. It was during her sovereignty that the first experiment of Italian opera was made in this country; and it is to its subsequent establishment as one of the institutions of the metropolis, and the gross affectation which this bred and nourished, that the degradation of art in England is wholly to be ascribed. At an earlier time, some sprigs of nobility returned from foreign travel, and some satellites of the Merry Monarch, pretended to a pleasure from performances in the Italian tongue which those in our own beautiful language failed to yield them; and they were justly satirized by Henry Lawes, who composed a song which obtained a wide acceptance, and which he afterwards showed to have been set to an index of the first lines of a collection of Italian poems, none of which bore any reference to the others. Not less absurd than this production, was the form of the first dramatic representations in which Italian singers appeared in London. The characters in these were divided between the exotic and our native executants, and the representatives of the two nationalities sang respectively in their own language, so that a question and its answer were in different tongues, and a lover and his mistress exchanged their vows in words that were unintelligible to each other. Music, like the other arts, has its cycles and its seasons; and, as there was a lapse in the pictorial greatness of Italy after the painters of the Cinque Cento, and in the literary splendour of England after the poets of the Elizabethan era, there was such a torpor in the musical genius of our country after the musicians who wrought side by side with Purcell. Hence, the hybrid performances just described were unopposed—the single champion of our secular music, apart from the Church composers of the day, being one Clayton, who was only distinguished for his utter want of distinction, and thus was powerless to check their progress. These libels on common sense and travesties of dramatic art were presented here in 1707 and the two following years; but in 1710, as the *Spectator* humourously expresses it, the fashionable world was relieved from the trouble of "understanding half an opera," for the performance was then given entirely in Italian. Even with this release from all mental exertion, the said fashionable world yielded but a questionable vitality to the new entertainment, which had its vicissitudes of worse and better fortune, and took not permanent root until its patronage became a political, more than an art demonstration, and the affectation that usurped the dominion of taste passed all bounds of civil decency.

Was it love of art, for instance, which induced the Prince of Wales to espouse the cause of an Opposition opera-house to that supported by

George II., when the quarrels between the King and his son ran so high as to cause the public advertisement in the daily journals that any person who attended the Prince's levées would not be received at St. James's; when the members of the King's and Prince's parties frequented respectively the one theatre or the other; and when it was a sign of Whiggery or Toryism for one to be found at the opera in the Haymarket or at that in Lincoln's Inn Fields? Was it love of art that induced the adherents of the royal George or the princely Frederick to evince their lordly breeding and gentle manners in tearing down the play-bills from the door of the theatre patronized by the rival faction? Was it love of art that induced ladies of quality to invite large assemblies from which it would have been as much a political offence as a breach of etiquette to be absent, on the nights when a new singer or a new composition was to be brought forward at the opera-house of the opposition party, in order to withdraw its most eminent supporters from among the audience? Was it love of art that justified a young lady's defence in the Court of Equity of her failure in a marriage contract—and this, too, on a 14th of February, of all days in the year, that her suitor in love and law had openly declared his dislike of Farinelli's singing, and that she could not become the life associate of such a monster? Was it love of art that excited another lady in high life at the close of one of the same singer's feats of vocal dexterity, to throw herself forward from her box, and casting up her arms and eyes towards the ceiling of the theatre, rapturously to ejaculate, "One God! one Farinelli!" Love and art had as little concern in such extravagances as reason and nature.

What was the immediate effect of the unfortunate fashion which has infected the taste and the truth of a hundred and fifty years? It at first provoked the sarcasm of the choicest wits of the time, and so enriched our literature with many a humorous sally, best remembered of which is that of Richard Byrom, erroneously attributed to Swift, epigrammatically commemorating the feud between the Buononciniists and the Handelists, and closing with the couplet—

Strange that such difference should be
"Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

This was, likely enough, an advantage, but one perhaps scarcely sufficient for letters, to counterbalance the concomitant evils to a sister art.

The worst of these evils is that our aristocracy and those who ape its manners, led by the example of our foreign rulers and the foreign court by whom this was strengthened, took to ignoring everything Anglican in connection with music. Our executive and productive abilities were unacknowledged by the classes of high birth and wealthy means, and even our noble English language was depreciated, stigmatized as unavailable for music—the language in which the thundering annunciation "He hath triumphed gloriously" makes every hearer tremble with joyous awe, while

it proclaims that Handel knew how to accentuate it,—the language in which the pathetic adjuration "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow!" draws tears from every one who has Christian feelings or human sympathies, while it demonstrates that Mr. Sims Reeves knows how to enunciate it. How much has been lost in the works that might have been written had not the light and warmth of recognition been denied to English genius, cannot be conjectured. How much has been lost in the pleasure that might have cheered society, had not our private singers preferred the Italian to their own tongue until they have become as incompetent to pronounce the one as unable to understand the other, might be more easily computed. This loss is, however, obvious; Handel frittered away his time and his genius in England from his twenty-fifth until his forty-eighth year, in the production of undramatic operas for the exhibition of effete singers in Italian, before his *Esther* and his *Acis and Galatea* were publicly performed. Not one of his many Italian operas ever will, ever can be given again; the latest representation of any one of them having been that of *Giulio Cesare*, by command of George III., in 1787, when it had already become an antiquarian curiosity; and, had Handel continued to feed the fashion with such pieces of purely temporary interest, his labours, if not his name, would now be unknown. The series of his deathless compositions to English words, sacred and secular, which are the pillars of his eternal fame, dates from the public performance of *Esther* and *Acis and Galatea* in 1732; and all time has therefore lost the treasures which must have sprung from his giant powers during the twenty-three years of life at which most men's minds are at the strongest, had not the follies and vices of the day prevailed against him and us and futurity.

The foundation of the Madrigal Society, in 1741, proves that the anti-nationalism of the time was limited to the foreign court and its surroundings. John Immyns, who originated this yet existing but greatly modified institution, was an attorney whom circumstances had reduced to gain his bread in the capacity of a lawyer's clerk. His madrigalian associates were Spitalfields weavers, small tradesmen, and artisans, all of the humbler classes. John Hawkins, the musical historian, was a member in his younger days, when his condition was little better than that of the founder; but he left the society when he rose in his profession, before he was appointed magistrate of Bow Street and dignified with knighthood. Mark this as indicative of the social changes which fourscore years had effected: at the music-clubs in the days of Charles II., gentle and simple met for the common practice and enjoyment of the art they loved, but at the Madrigal Society in George II.'s time persons of better means shrank from the fellowship of their poorer brethren, and sacrificed music to taste. The first meetings of the society were held at the sign of the Twelve Bells in Bride Lane. These took place once a week, and a quarterly subscription of three shillings was the fee for membership, which included the

cost of a supper on each occasion. Frugal fellows these must have been, the first of the Madrigal Society, who could sing and sup together at the rate of something under threepence a time; but they were right musical in their frugality, having a strict law that forbade, under a penalty of sixpence, supping during singing hours, so as to ensure respect for the object of their assembly and the utmost edification from its pursuit. The admission test for membership was the requirement to sing at sight any piece from the society's library; and this test was administered between the first and second acts of the evening's performance, then and there, in hearing of all the members. The society had implicit belief in the choral music of the olden time, and condemned the foreign trivialities of the day as degrading to art and derogatory to England. It was instituted, therefore, to preserve the former in substance and in practice. The Madrigal Society made many migrations from tavern to tavern, and underwent many upheavings in its rate of subscription. It has now degenerated into a community of gentlemen presided over by an Indian Maharajah, who hold eight monthly meetings at the Freemasons' Tavern during the year, at which dining is the first essential, and music follows with the dessert, in abnegation of the primitive law against simultaneous supping and singing, and who pay, besides the charge for dinner, an annual subscription of more pounds than the shillings of the original quarterage, when the gatherings were six and a half times more frequent; but it is still a monument of the musical love and skill of the people proper in the very year 1741, when Handel wrote *Messiah* for Dublin because London did not countenance him, and he was thus compelled to seek in Ireland for opportunities which he could not obtain here.

Of a totally different constitution from that of the Madrigal Society are the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club, the Glee Club, and the Conectores Sodales, founded respectively in 1762, in 1787, and in 1798: the first by some of the gentry who had a fancy to spice their cakes and ale with the savour of song; the second by Drs. Arnold and Calcott, for the purpose of drawing the attention, and thus the patronage, of the wealthy to their art; and the third by William Horsley, under the god-fathership of the scholarly Samuel Webbe, with the more professional, if not more practical, object of promoting vocal composition.

The glee was now developed into a special class of writing, as distinguished from the madrigal, the ballet, and the part-song, but it lost its etymological gleesome character and became more frequently heroic, pastoral, amatory, or even pathetic, than convivial; nay, the anomalous epithet "serious glee" is not of rare application, as who should say lugubrious mirth or doleful jollity, and so at best make but a sad joke or a sorry jest.

Upon the whole, although the glee be admitted as a class of composition essentially English, it is a class in which we have no great occasion for pride, since, as a class, the excellent pieces which form

the minority of its instances are too exceptional to give it specific dignity. Musical England has been "under a cloud"—I confess while I bewail it—ever since she has been governed by kings and queens and princes who have spoken German as their native speech, or been the sons or daughters of German fathers or German mothers or both; and the English glee may be at best regarded as a rainbow on the cloud, giving promise of the renewed fertility of our native land after the drying up of the deluge.

The nature of the glee indicates, to some extent, that of the clubs established for its professed cultivation. The first object of all these clubs was to dine. The next was to listen to, not to participate in, the performance of glees, rounds, and catches. The next was to award prizes for compositions in these classes, which prizes—as a matter of course—have not always been gained by the most meritorious pieces offered in competition. The character of these pieces is, in many cases, such as to suit the after-dinner temperament of that order of gentlemen who considered themselves unworthy of the title if they went to bed with less than two bottles of wine within their waistcoats. It is vain-glorious, mock-heroic, bibulous, or sentimental, so as to fit it to the several stages of bottledom of those who heard, and the several degrees of inward complacency of those who sang it. The facility of the production of such pieces is as clearly evidenced as the fecundity of the composer, in the fact that on one occasion Dr. Calcott sent into the Catch Club the extraordinary number of one hundred several works to compete for its annual prize: a fact which so incommoded the umpires that the Club prohibited any candidate from submitting more than twelve pieces on any future occasion. Ladies had no admission to the festivities of these institutions, and the treble parts, when there were any in the glees, were sung by boys, who, it is to be hoped, derived better musical than they could moral advantages from their share in the evening's proceedings.

All this while, from Queen Anne's time downwards, when the court and fashion had their Italian opera, when the workers of the town had their madrigalian suppers, with an occasional country excursion, of which music made the chief pleasure, and the festive gentry made the patronage of glee-singing a pretext for their convivial meetings, our song-writers, however disesteemed, were adding to the nation's wealth by the multiplication of their simple melodies, successively characteristic of the days in which they were written; and they thus kept alive in the heart of the people the enfeebled but never yet extinguished love of music. Each and every of these composers has contributed his store to the joyousness of Englishmen, and thus to their welfare.

Had I space to comment upon each, I might name many musicians, productive and executive, whose talent brightened the early years of the present century, who would be better regarded here had they been born elsewhere, and better known in other countries had not their doings, like

their birthplace, been shut out from the European continent by the seas that surround us. More than any of these is honoured that of Sir H. R. Bishop, who made himself master of the circumstances of the moment, met the time's requirements when no one else had the skill or the will to do so, and in a few years of rapid productivity, such as has rarely been matched, planted a reputation that will long be kept green by the multitude of favourite pieces which still nourish its root.

Bishop domiciled the glee upon the stage, restored to it its instrumental accompaniment and its dialogical, if not its dramatic, character, and gave to it, if not also restored—for my belief is that ladies shared the performance of the first Commonwealth specimens—the advantage of female voices. The voice of woman is to music what her smile is to society: it gives verve and clearness to the most salient points of the harmony, and brightens the melodious surface. The usage of the theatre induced the first employment of women singers in Bishop's concerted music; the music being appropriated to them was available for private performance, and society, reversing the proverb, showed that where there is a way there is a will, in adopting the music directly it came within reach. * It is too true that Bishop retarded the re-awakening among us of the musicality which the manners of the country under the four Georges had lulled. He retarded this by flattering the ignorance to which the public was degraded, in mangling the masterpieces of foreign schools to reduce them to the level of untought comprehension, instead of teaching the people through the gentle lesson of their winning beauty; and he further retarded it by contracting his own genial capabilities within the Chinese shoe of convention, instead of permitting their natural expansion so that they might draw upwards the popular intelligence. The world's gratitude is due to him, however, for having socialised the musical art, for having given the opportunity and thus revived the custom, for women and men to conjoin together for mutual pleasure in musical performance. It is, I feel, largely if not wholly due to the charm and to the practicability of this composer's glees, that family meetings for music became common, then extended themselves into minglings of several families, and have now grown into the greater and smaller choral institutions that aid to elevate the nation by disseminating a knowledge and rekindling the ancient love of art in every city and town, if not yet in every village and hamlet throughout the country.

It is more than thirty years ago that madrigal singing, with its old choral multiplicity of voices, became a feature which always proves to be most interesting at public concerts. Then followed the importation and instant adoption of German part-songs, which are reproductions, I will not say imitations, of the precise form and character of those that were written and sung in England two hundred and fifty years before. The revival of madrigals incited our young musicians to contrapuntal study. The revival of part songs stimulated their freer thought to seek expression, and to find

it, in modern phraseology, characterized by the modern harmonic resources from which this springs.

The Philharmonic Society was established in 1813, and it has done much to arouse the musical sense of its limited number of subscribers. It has done yet more for art in eliciting, by express commission, from Beethoven, from Mendelssohn, and from several other masters, some of the best of their works. The existence of this Society and the result of its operations are alone nugatory of the aspersion which it is the aim of these remarks to contradict. A shorter-lived and less respected institution, the Society of British Musicians, began, in 1834, its good work of encouragement to native artists and guidance to those who knew not how to appreciate them, by its defiance of the prejudice which had spread by this time from the upper to the lower classes. Musical organisations have multiplied in later years with growing benefit to the musicianship of the country, most important, though not most successful, among which have been those expressly devoted to the lyrical drama in our native language. It must not be overlooked, as an important incident in the art history of these later times, that in 1822 was established, and in the following year was opened, our Royal Academy of Music, which gave a strong impetus to musical study and has proved a valuable arena for its pursuit. Thence have emanated musicians that adorn every department of the art, and there germs of musical promise are in course of cultivation.

Mr. John Hullah enjoys a deserved esteem for his share, under the auspices of the Council of Education, in the popular culture of the last eight-and-thirty years; but it is perhaps a question whether the large assumptions of persons, otherwise well educated, who have gleaned a minimum of musical knowledge through the means he has rendered easily accessible, be not an evil to art far greater than the good that has been wrought among the common people by his teaching, and that of his pupil-teachers.

One more institution demands mention because it begins to command a very wide respect. This is the Tonic Sol-Fa Association, which, however peculiar its instructional means, has manifestly the effect of disseminating musical knowledge among the masses—an effect mainly due to the zealous activity of its leaders. Let me adduce, with thankful pleasure, a fact that is more than a year old in evidence of the useful working of these friends of art. At a multitudinous assembly of the disciples of this singular system, a piece of music which had been composed for the occasion, and had not until then been seen by human eyes save those of the writer and the printers, was handed forth to the members of the chorus there present, and then, before an audience furnished at the same time with copies to test the accuracy of the performance, forty-five hundred singers sang it at first sight in a manner to fulfil the highest requirements of the severest judges. The pretence is too foolish to have any weight, that in a town where such a feat was possible, there was not a vast amount of fondness

and aptitude for music among the public at large, from whom, or from its lower ranks chiefly, the members were gathered of this ready-reading choir. During these last hundred and fifty years, the royal and the noble of the land have despised our language and disregarded the music associated with it, and the world at large has followed in their footsteps, until their affected mincing gait has shuffled out of use the firm honest tread of an Englishman. The people are now beginning to think for themselves in defiance of the prejudice which, from within or from without, has overgrown them like a fungus; and at their volunteer musical drillings, as at their volunteer rifle drillings, they are gaining power and confidence to stand erect and march by the strength of their own conviction.

Meantime, our Italian Opera has, for a second time, become twofold, and so, by force of rivalry and partisanship, more than doubled its pernicious art influence. A considerable minority of the composers whose works are there performed are Italians. A minority of the compositions were originally set to the Italian language, and those which are translated suffer materially from the traduction, in the sound, the accent, and the very sense of the misappropriated words, and in the perversion of the author's design in misfitting them to the uses of the Italian stage. A large majority of the vocalists who present these distorted works of art are not Italians, and the several German, French, Swedish, American, and English singers—who some of them may not understand the language they have to utter, and many of them cannot pronounce it—would be heard to better advantage each in his own native tongue, if not in one that was familiar to his audience.

It would now be a pleasure to speak of the English musicians of the matured and of those of the rising generation who are at present working in the midst of us. A few words, however, would not do justice to their separate claims upon general sympathy with their various endeavours in the cause they have on hand and at heart; and other reasons besides the bounds of space render it impossible to enlarge upon their merits. I will only aver that such men are, and refer to public experience of recent years for warrant of the country's right to trust in them.

My allusions have been all to vocal compositions, and chiefly to vocal composers, because such works are generally more accessible than the instrumental music of former times; and such men have more directly addressed the nation at large than those who wrote for the gratification of persons skilled in some particular department of musical art. I have spoken only of secular music, as being specially the music of the people. English Church music is distinct alike from the Roman and the Lutheran. The excellent merit of that produced during the first two centuries after the Reformation, before Hanoverian influence demoralized as much the Church as its art-accessories, is only unacknowledged where it is unknown, and only unadmired where it is misunderstood.

Two obstacles impede our recovery of that character which formerly

was as freely accorded to us by stranger nations as it was fondly nourished at home: our character for music, whose dark age set in in the very days when our character for painting began to dawn—the days of Hogarth, Thornhill, and Ramsay. The first of these obstacles is the belief in the fallacy that the English language is not good for singing, and the consequent affectation of our private, and alas! some of our public vocalists, to prefer singing in Italian, by the injurious practice of which they forfeit the ability to make themselves interesting or even intelligible when they attempt the enunciation of their mother tongue. The other obstacle in the way of our musical resuscitation is the inefficient rudimentary instruction that too often clogs the after career of artists and amateurs. Ill educated in first principles, they are frequently incompetent to the simplest tasks of their art, though they pretend to feats of which well-schooled practitioners are diffident. It is not to be wondered at that taste is on a par with teaching, and that persons like bad music who know nothing of musical elements. This faulty tuition is not the consequence, but the cause of our low musical level, since it is not administered—would that I could say otherwise—only by English instructors.

These two serious obstacles must give way to the force of time, when the people will become regenerate, when the love and the talent natural to them will find free scope, when we shall no longer allow, and foreigners will no longer acquiesce in, the prejudice that "the English are not a musical people."

G. A. MACFARREN.

Theology in Extremis :

OR, A SOLILOQUY THAT MAY HAVE BEEN DELIVERED IN INDIA,
JUNE, 1857.

“The Mahometans would have spared life to any of their English prisoners who should consent to profess Mahometanism, by repeating the usual short formula ; but only one half-caste cared to save himself in that way.”—*Extract from a newspaper account of one of the Indian massacres.*

MORITURUS LOQUITUR.

I.

Oft in the pleasant summer years,
 Reading the tales of days bygone,
 I have mused on the story of human tears,
 All that man unto man has done—
 Massacre, torture, and black despair—
 Reading it all in my easy-chair.

II.

Passionate prayer for a minute's life ;
 Tortured, crying for death as rest ;
 Husband pleading for child or wife,
 Pitiless stroke upon tender breast.
 Was it all real as that I lay there
 Lazily stretched on my easy-chair ?

III.

Could I believe in those hard old times
 Here, in this safe luxurious age ?
 Were the horrors invented to season rhymes,
 Or truly is man so fierce in his rage ?
 What could I suffer, and what could I dare ?
 I who was bred to that easy-chair.

IV.

They were my fathers, the men of yore,
 Little they recked of a cruel death ;
 They would dip their hands in a heretic's gore,
 They stood and burnt for a rule of faith.
 What would I burn for, and whom not spare ?
 I, who had faith in an easy-chair.

V.

Now do I see old tales are true,
 Here in the clutch of a savage foe ;
 Now shall I know what my fathers knew ;
 Bodily anguish and bitter woe,
 Naked and bound in the hot sun's glare,
 Far from my civilized easy-chair.

VI.

Now have I tasted and understood,
 That old-world feeling of mortal hate ;
 For the Mussulmans round us are keen for blood,
 They will kill us coolly—they do but wait ;
 While I—I would sell ten lives, at least,
 For one fair stroke at that devilish priest

VII.

Just in return for the kick he gave,
 Bidding me call on the prophet's name ;
 Even a dog by this may save
 Skin from the knife, and soul from the flame ;
 My soul ! if he can let the prophet burn it ;
 But life *is* sweet if a word may earn it.

VIII.

A bullock's death, and at thirty years !
 Just one phrase, and a man gets off it.
 Look at that mongrel clerk in his tears,
 Whining aloud the name of the prophet ;
 Only a formula easy to patter,
 And, God Almighty, what *can* it matter ?

IX.

"Matter enough," will my comrade say,
 Praying aloud here close at my side,
 "Whether you mourn in despair alway,
 Cursed for ever by Christ denied ;
 Or whether you suffer a minute's pain
 All the reward of Heaven to gain."

X.

Not for a moment faltereth he,
 Sure of the promise and pardon of sin ;
 Thus did the martyrs die, I see,
 Little to lose and muckle to win ;
 Death means Heaven—he longs to receive it,
 But what shall I do if I don't believe it ?

XI.

Life is pleasant, and friends may be nigh,
Fain would I speak one word and be spared;
Yet I could be silent and cheerfully die
If I were only sure God cared;
If I had Faith, and were only certain
That Light is behind that terrible curtain.

XII.

But what if He listeth nothing at all
Of words a poor wretch in his terror may say,
That mighty God who created all?
Who meant us to live our appointed day,
Who needs not either to bless or ban,
Weaving the woof of an endless plan.

XIII.

He is the Reaper, and binds the sheaf,
Shall not the season its order keep?
Can it be changed by a man's belief?
Millions of harvests still to reap.
Will God reward, if I die for a creed,
Or will He but pity, and sow more seed?

XIV.

Surely He pities who made the brain,
When breaks that mirror of memories sweet,
When the hard blow falleth, and never again
Nerve shall quiver nor pulse shall beat.
Bitter the vision of vanishing joys—
Surely He pities when man destroys.

XV.

Here stand I on the ocean's brink,
Who hath brought news of the further shore?
How shall I cross it? Sail or sink,
One thing is sure, I return no more.
Shall I find haven, or aye shall I be
Tossed in the depths of a shoreless sea?

XVI.

They tell fair tales of a far-off land,
Of love rekindled, of forms renewed;
There may I only touch one hand,
Here life's ruin will little be rued;
But the hand I have pressed and the voice I have heard,
To lose them for ever, and all for a word!

XVII.

Now do I feel that my heart must break,
 All for one glimpse of a woman's face;
 Swiftly the slumbering memories wake
 Odour and shadow of hour and place;
 One bright ray through the darkening past
 Leaps from the lamp as it brightens last,

XVIII.

Showing me summer in western land
 Now, as the cool breeze murmureth
 In leaf and flower—And here I stand
 In a plain all bare save the shadow of death,
 Leaving my life in its full noonday;
 And no one to know why I flung it away!

XIX.

Why? Am I bidding for glory's roll?
 I shall be murdered and clean forgot;
 Is it a bargain to save my soul?
 God, whom I trust in, bargains not.
 Yet for the honour of English race,
 May I not live or endure disgrace.

XX.

I must be gone to the crowd untold
 Of men by the cause which they served unknown,
 Who moulder in myriad graves of old,
 Never a story and never a stone
 Tells of the martyrs who die like me,
 Just for the pride of the old countree.

XXI.

Ay, but the word, if I could have said it,
 I by no terrors of hell perplex—
 Hard to be silent and get no credit
 From man in this world, or reward in the next.
 None to bear witness and reckon the cost
 Of the name that is saved by the life that is lost.

A. C. L.

The Victorial: A Story of an Old Spanish Robber.

THE *Victorial* one would imagine, by its high-sounding title, to be an epic poem, whereas it is simply a chronicle of the deeds and adventures of the *siempre vencedor, jamas vencido caballero*, Don Pedro Niño, Conde de Buelna, a valiant Spanish captain by sea and land, born about the year 1378. It was written by his *alferez*, or standard-bearer, Gutierre Diaz de Gamez, who was of the same age as himself, and entered into his service at twenty-three years of age, and never left his side from that time to his death; so that he was an eyewitness of all the actions he relates.

This story of the deeds of the Don Pedro Niño appears to have been composed at his own suggestion—at all events in his will he makes especial provision for the safe keeping of the manuscript as one of his most cherished possessions. It was, after the death of his countess, to be preserved for ever in the sacristy of the church of his town of Cigales, in the coffer of the treasury; and it was never to be allowed to be taken away, though it might be consulted on the spot. The original manuscript has, however, perished, but sundry manuscript copies remain. It was published, in a mutilated form, at Madrid in 1782, by Don Eugenio de Llaguno. Southey has made use of it in his *Lives of the British Admirals*. M. Viollet le Duc has taken from it a vivid description of French château-life in the fourteenth century for his *Dictionnaire Raisonné du Mobilier Français*. Some portions of it have been published in Germany. The narrative of the exploits of its hero by sea has been of eminent use to naval archæologists, and a translation, with excellent notes, has been published by the Comtes Albert de Circourt and Puymaigre at Paris, both known for their extensive acquaintance with old Castilian literature.

A perusal of the chronicle gives us a satisfactory assurance that the good *alferez* is a reliable witness for such events as came under his eye. He is singularly modest in speaking of himself, and, for a Spaniard, he is freer from national prejudice than any writer one can meet with, as is proved by the following estimate of the distinctive qualities of English, French, and Castilians:—

“The English decide a long time beforehand; they act with forethought and reflection. The French decide only in the fire of action; they are presumptuous and rash. The Castilians decide when the business is over; they are indolent and never tired of deliberation.” This is a blunt enough comment on the text, *Socorro de España siempre perdido por tardo*.

Some of the pages have especial interest for an English reader, since they contain an account of the plundering expedition which Pedro Niño made, in company with Messire Charles de Savoisy, along the English

coast, when they sacked St. Erth, Pool, Portland, and other places. The notions which the *alferez* has of the history, geography, and internal condition of England are amusing, too, in their way. He believes religiously in Brut, has the strangest possible legend about Eleanor of Guyenne and the cause of the war between France and England, mixes up the battles of Cressy and Poitiers together, and confounds Charles VI. with Charles V. But no one will go to the pages of Gutierre de Gamez to learn English history. Neither do we place much store on his long preface about chivalry, in the course of which he gives strange versions of the deeds of Solomon, Alexander, Nebuchadnezzar, and Julius Cæsar, as being the four great princes of ancient times whose lives are worthy of study and imitation. The good *alferez*, who wrote this chronicle when he was about seventy, is fond of sermonizing on every occasion, and he cannot speak of the marriage of his captain without giving us a little treatise on the various degrees of love, and giving short histories of Calceptrix, queen of the Amazons, Penthesilea, &c., all of which we owe to the fact that Gutierre de Gamez had read the *Poëma de Alexandro* and the *Historia Civitatis Troyæ* of Guido della Collonna, translated into the Castilian of his time.

Don Pedro Niño does not appear to have had his origin from any very remarkable family; it is true that because he had *fleurs-de-lys* in his coat-of-arms he wished to be thought to be descended from a younger branch of the French royal family: but this we imagine to have been a weakness on the part of Pedro Niño. His grandfather was a good soldier, but he fought under Peter the Cruel and on the same side with our Black Prince: consequently when Don Henrique II. prevailed with Du Guesclin and put his brother to death and seized the crown, the family of the Niños fell into disgrace for a time; and in spite of the disdainful speech which Gamez, on the authority of Pedro Niño, attributes to his father when the Queen of Castile sent for Doña Ines Laso, his mother, and offered her the infant prince, afterwards Don Henrique III., to nurse, we imagine the family never had any occasion to repent their acceptance of the charge of rearing the heir to the crown; for we find they almost immediately received as reward the gift from the king of the fiefs of Cigales, Berzosa, and Fuente-Burueva. And the fact that their son was thus made the foster-brother of Don Henrique III. of Castile was the main cause of all the prosperity to which he attained.

The King of Castile, Don Juan II., moreover, evidently taking charge of the boy's welfare, gave Pedro Niño—or Pero Niño, as he was familiarly called—a governor at an early age, to teach him all the good manners of the time. The *alferez* gives us one of the preceptor's discourses to his pupil, which we may abbreviate. We may omit the portions where he discusses on his duty of raising his family up to its *former great estate*; likewise wholly that which shows the greatness and goodness of the Deity, by the facts that the sun shines by day and the moon by night, and that the sea is full of whales, and the air of little birds; also the portion which inculcates obedience to Holy Church, and the duty of imitating the

martyr spirit of Saint Iago. From these generalities he descends to particular admonitions, which show, at least, that the moral ideal of those days was good enough, whatever may have been their practice. "Incline your ear to the poor; answer him gently; give him alms. Deliver the oppressed. Beware of deceivers, and those who promise to make two doubloons out of one, and to turn silver into gold. Seek the society of the good, and you will become like them. Keep from the bad, or you cannot escape contamination. Be temperate in food, drink, and sleep; the soul should be to the body as the musician to the instrument, and if your instrument is made false, the musician will never draw out the right notes; but when the instrument is well accorded the breath of the player fills it with harmony. Do not deliver your noble person to the society of dishonourable women, for they demand love and have none to give in return. Their intercourse is a shortening of life, corruption of virtue, and transgression of the law of God. My son, keep clear of avarice if you would be your own master; if not you will be a slave; your care will be measured by the quantity of your riches. Esteem not a man for what fortune gives him. The honour of owning castles, herds, flocks, horses, fine clothes, and metal, things of earthly origin, cannot equal that of wisdom and virtue, things of the soul. Regard your vassals not for the good you may get of them, but as your friends. A noble man hath a generous tongue. Be gentle to all the world. There is nothing more noble than the heart of man, and never, with good grace, will it endure oppression. More men are gained by love than by fear. No courteous man will say behind the back what he will not say before the face. Four great faults are there—pride, obstinacy, haste, and idleness. The fruit of pride is hatred; of obstinacy, contention; of haste, repentance; of idleness, ruin.

"My son, serve the king, but keep at a distance from him, for he is a lion whose play is destruction and whose paw gives death in sport. Fear not death. He alone should fear death who has done little good and much evil."

Pero Niño, according to Gamez, turned out a *caballero* endowed with moral qualities not unworthy of his preceptor, who set indeed small store by learning of any kind, telling Pero, at the age of ten, that he knew now nearly enough for all practical purposes. But God, says the *alferez*, had been liberal to Pedro of inward gifts. He grew up very courteous and gracious of speech, resolute with the strong, gentle with the weak, and amiable to all; cautious in question and reply, just in judgment, and always forgiving. He was the defence of the poor, his purse was always open, and no solicitor went away from him with an empty hand. He was constant and sincere, and no word-breaker. He was never idle. Temperance was the rule of his life; he was chaste in his youth; never ate or drank except at the hours of repast, knowing the truth of the proverb that idleness, high living, and honour never dwell in the same house. As for his person, he was handsome, strongly built, of middle stature, and well made; his shoulders were broad, his chest developed,

his waist slender, his arms were long, and his legs well shaped. His voice was clear and agreeable, his conversation lively, and his expressions elegant. He was always dressed well; his costume was carefully arranged, and he carried it well. A poor dress looked better on him than a rich one on many others. He caught up the new fashions quicker than the tailor, and others imitated his way of dressing. As for armour and weapons, he was a true connoisseur; he could teach armourers the best way of cutting and fashioning coats of mail, and how to make them lighter without being less strong. Of sword and dagger he was equally a good judge. No one understood so well how a saddle should be made, and he invented many improvements in the way of caparisoning horses. No Castilian had so many horses. He trained them in his own way, for war, for jousting, and for parade. He was a splendid swordsman. He excelled in athletic exercises; he surpassed all in manœuvres with the lance; he was a good shot with the crossbow, and by assiduous practice, cultivated all the gifts of his person for the profession of a knight and a noble.

Pero Niño, the foster-brother of the king, Don Henrique, became his close companion, and accompanied him in all his expeditions. Don Henrique began to govern on his own authority in his fourteenth year, for his father, Don Juan, died early in life and left him a minor. In those days of feudal anarchy a royal minority was always a bad time for a kingdom. The superior feudal lords almost invariably, as a matter of course, at such times arranged leagues and attempted all manner of aggressions. Don Alfonso, the uncle of the king, after having rebelled against the royal authority, while it was in the hands of the regent, as soon as Don Henrique assumed the government himself, set up the standard of revolt at Gijon. Pero Niño, being then fifteen, accompanied his sovereign on an expedition against Gijon, and the king supplied him with arms and armour out of his own armoury. After having brought affairs at Gijon to a successful issue, Don Henrique went to Seville to settle some disturbances caused by a riot and outbreak against the Jews, and while there Pero Niño distinguished himself twice in the same day at a hunting-party on the banks of the Guadalquivir. He first succeeded in killing a wild-boar, which, being hard pressed, had taken to the river: Pero Niño swam after it, speared it, and brought it to land. And in the evening, as the king was returning in his galley down the stream at a great pace, Pero's quick eye caught sight of a hawser stretching across the river before them, which would have infallibly upset the whole party, had not the young fellow leapt to the prow and sheared it asunder with one blow of his sword. After making a brilliant figure at various tournaments, and in the games with the jereed—the *juego de cañas*, which the Spaniards had learnt from the Arabs; after having his horse killed under him at his first battle, fought in company with the king, Pero Niño served in a campaign under the banner of the *condestable* of Castile, Don Ruy Lopez Davalos, against the King of Portugal; and in this expedition, before Pontevedra, gave signs of great prowess, fighting, on one occasion, for two hours with two

painful wounds in the head and neck, and killing a famous swordsman, Gomez Domao, on whom he administered such a *coup de grace* with his sword, that he cut through his shield and slit his skull down to the eyes.

After this brilliant commencement of Pero's long career of arms, the king selected him at twenty-five to command an expedition against the Barbary corsairs. Don Henrique provided his foster-brother with two excellent galleys, manned with robust rowers, the best crossbowmen which could be found. He gave them beforehand, according to the custom of Castile, strangely at variance with the later ways of penniless Spain, all their pay for the whole term of the service for which they were engaged, and he provided Pero Niño with all manner of arms, with good and strong crossbows, and sufficient coin in gold and silver for his necessities in foreign countries. Pero Niño's cousin, Fernando Niño, and the *alferez*, accompanied him, and thirty young *caballeros* of his own age. These galleys and one sailing-vessel started from Seville. Before starting Pero Niño passed his squadron in review before the townspeople of Seville, who were delighted at the brave figure they made. One of the chief inhabitants of Seville, indeed, was so pleased that he invited Pero Niño and all his squadron to lay-to at Coria, about eighteen miles below Seville, where he had a country-house, and there he gave Pero Niño and the *caballeros*, his companions, a splendid banquet, in which the roasted peacock of chivalry, with the tail admirably displayed, was not forgotten, and during which their entertainer made them a set speech after the fashion of the times, to encourage them to deeds of arms. As they passed, too, along the Moorish coast, at Gibraltar, and Algeziras, and Malaga, the Moorish inhabitants of these cities came out to admire their galleys, and as soon as they were assured of their peaceful intentions, offered them all kinds of festivities, and gave presents to the captain. They made dances for him to the sound of Moorish flutes and trumpets, the *xabibas*, the *añafiles*, and other instruments, and sent his sailors sheep and oxen, the *alcouzcouz*, and other delicacies. Nevertheless the galleys were several times, as they coasted along, enveloped in a thick fog, all owing to the wicked contrivances of Moorish sorcerers; but by the expedient of each crew making the sign of the cross all at once, and saying certain prayers, these fogs were always dispersed. They were assailed, too, by a tempest; yet the galleys coasted on to Carthagea, and from thence crossed over to the Barbary coast, and cruised about there, looking for corsairs. They met with no corsairs on their first visit to the Barbary coast, but they had a fight with the Moors on shore, having been obliged to put into a creek to get water. They managed to provide themselves with water, and to effect a successful retreat to their ships, at cost of much hard fighting; and the skill and courage of Pero Niño on this occasion inspired his crew with complete confidence in their leader.

On his return to Carthagea Pero Niño got news of a corsair who had done great damage to the merchant subjects of the king, his master. This was a Castilian, one Juan de Castillo, who, having committed man-

slaughter in Spain, had escaped and taken to piracy in company with a Moorish galley. Pero Niño followed these two galleys up from port to port till he came to Marseilles. At Marseilles he was about to attack them near the harbour, when a galley came out bearing the Papal ensign, the cross keys of St. Peter, and having a knight of St. John on board. The knight of St. John asked them who they were, and when he was told, said that the Pope (or rather Antipope Benedict XIII., then in refuge at Marseilles) begged him to observe the peace of his city, in return for which he should have his benediction and a hospitable reception. Pero Niño obeyed the Pope's injunctions, and desisted from his attack. He was invited by the Pope to his château, and passed a few days in Marseilles, accepting the hospitality of the Pope, his cardinals and followers, with the determination, however, of still following up the corsairs, who had run away during this time to his great displeasure. After leaving Marseilles he went to Toulon, and there heard that the corsairs had gone off in the direction of Sardinia and Corsica. Pero Niño was not destined to fall in with these corsairs again, but hearing in the course of his cruising that the Sultan of Tunis was fitting up some galleys, he determined to go to Tunis and seize them. It does not appear that the King of Castile was actually at war at this time with the Sultan of Tunis, but between Moors and Christians war public or private was considered a commendable affair at any time. Pero Niño then, crossing over from Sardinia, crept along the coast of Barbary with a view of surprising the Tunisian galleys. He anchored his ships for a while at a desert island, now called Zimbrot, about five leagues from Tunis, to rest his men a while after the fatigues of the sea-voyage, for they had been assailed by a tremendous storm in their passage over. During the ten days they anchored there the captain allowed no fire to be lighted, to avoid discovery. On a moonlight night Pero Niño crept out with his galleys from his hiding-place and ran straight to Tunis. The galleys moved gently, with muffled oars, no words were spoken, and the dip of the oar-blades was scarcely distinguishable; in this quiet fashion they came right upon a Moorish galley at anchor at about a league from Tunis. The Moorish crew were taken quite unawares, nevertheless they defended themselves till they were all killed or taken prisoners. The prisoners gave intelligence that their sultan was fitting up a large galley in the port—his own state galley in fact—and Pero Niño determined to carry off this vessel. But a Genoese carrack, lying at anchor in the harbour, had heard the noise of the fighting going on three miles off, and blew the trumpet to make ready for action, themselves on the look-out for corsairs. This warned the crew of the royal galley, which prepared for action also, and retreated up a canal, closely followed by Pero Niño and his two galleys. The canal was so narrow that Pero Niño could only attack the enemy from behind. He stood on the prow of his own vessel and ordered the rowers to drive hard into the stern of the boat before him, and when the ships approached near enough he leapt, armed as he was, with cuirass and brassards, with a steel cap and a shield and sword, on to

the enemy's poop. The collision of the two ships caused a retreat of the following vessel, just as Pero had leapt: he was for some time left alone on board the enemy's ship, but defended himself against the whole crew, though wounded in several places, and very severely in one leg. His own vessel approached at last, and the Moorish galley was taken. The Moors had, however, run it aground, and while Pero Niño was endeavouring to get it afloat day broke, and the whole male population of Tunis came down to attack the audacious Christian galleys. There was a desperate fight: the Moors swarmed round the ships in thousands, on foot and on horseback, in the water, and tried to board the galleys, but the Castilians fought their way out, committing such havoc that the sea was crimson with blood. They were unable, however, to carry off their prizes, which they rifled and set on fire.

After this Pero Niño returned to Carthage, sent the Moorish prisoners he had taken to the king, divided his booty among his sailors, freshened up his weather-beaten galleys, and prepared for another cruise on the coast of Barbary. During this second expedition Pero Niño suffered so much from the wound in his leg which he received at Tunis, that he had often to resign the leadership of his men in the descents which he made on the Moorish coast from time to time. Evidently, too, this cruising about for corsairs, and the habit he had got of looking upon all Moorish property as legitimate booty, had demoralized Pero's mind, for we now read that the first thing this expedition did on getting over to the coast of Barbary was to look out for some village or small city to sack, and no *smala* of any rich Moghrebin chieftain, none of the poorest Arab *douars*, were safe from these Castilian rovers, if they were at a convenient distance from the shore. The Castilian freebooters made themselves a kind of hawk's nest at the desert isle of Alhabiba, and from thence they swept along the Moorish coast, pouncing down on whatever game on shore attracted their notice. The richest capture in this way was the *smala* of Mohammed Muley Hadji, a rich Moghrebin chief, who had left his women and flocks and herds behind him near a small seaport called Arzeo-el-Belli, while he had himself gone off to attack an Arab *douar* not far away, with his tribe, mounted on 1,500 camels. A Moor, whom they had caught up along the coast, gave them news of the rich undefended *smala* of Mohammed Muley Hadji. So one morning, at early dawn, the galleys of Pero Niño dropped anchor off the sandy shore of Arzeo-el-Belli, and Pedro landed his soldiers, armed with lance and sword, and a goodly band of crossbowmen, who surrounded the oxen and sheep, which they had seen from the sea, and began to drive the poor beasts to the shore, where they hamstringed them and cut their throats, so that the whole shore was covered with bleeding carcasses. While Pero Niño's men were engaged thus a body of Moors arrived upon them, and a fight ensued, in which the Castilians got the upper hand, and, in pursuit of their enemies, came right upon the black tents of the great *smala* of Mohammed Muley Hadji, containing all the women of himself and his chief men, all his Arabs' tent furniture, and the

remainder of his camels and mules and asses. A desperate struggle took place here, for Moorish horsemen arrived on all sides to defend their wives and property. The whole day was taken up with fighting, in which, however, the Spaniards managed in the end to get off to their galleys with a goodly quantity of booty, with rich Moorish carpets, *alcatifas* and *alfombras*, barrels and jars of honey and butter, salted and smoked provisions, dates, almonds, ostrich feathers, porcupine quills, and bread and corn in abundance. Nevertheless, although Pedro Niño was not discontented with that day's work, he was not satisfied on the whole with his cruise, *since he had not yet put some considerable place of the country to sack*; and after one or two more fights of this character he was obliged to return to Carthagena, where he found a king's letter, ordering him to return to Seville. The wound in Pero Niño's leg had never healed, and at Seville it became so bad that he was obliged to lay up and call in the best surgeons of the place to consult. Their first opinion was that the leg must be amputated to save Pero Niño's life, but Pero Niño bluntly declared that life was worth nothing to a *caballero* with only one leg, that he would never consent to this, though he was ready to undergo every other operation. The surgeons then determined to cauterize the wound with red-hot iron. A piece of red-hot iron of the thickness of a cross-bow-bolt was heated to a white heat, and as the doctors seemed squeamish about the operation, fearing to put Pero Niño to so much pain, he seized the iron himself, and without hesitation or sign of pain on his face, passed it up and down his wound and probed it to the bottom. This operation he performed for himself twice, after which the wound healed, and Pero Niño so rapidly recovered that he shortly after made a most brilliant appearance at a tournament given on the occasion of the birth of the king's eldest son, after which the king sent Pero Niño with three galleys to France, to assist the French against the English, for the two nations were in their normal state of war, and treaties of offensive and defensive alliance between France and Spain were of ancient date.

Pero Niño first betook himself with his three galleys to Rochelle, where he met the Seigneur de Seignelay, Messire Charles de Savoisy, who, with two galleys, was appointed by the King of France—Charles VI.—to keep company with Pedro Niño in an intended foray on the English coast. From La Rochelle the two captains went to St. Malo, and from thence, in the face of a violent storm, passed over to the coast of Cornwall. They seized some fishing boats on their way, from whose owners to get information of the state of the country. The first place they made a descent upon appears to have been St. Erth, described as a town of 800 inhabitants, chiefly merchants and fishermen, and very rich. According to Gamez's account, the French and Spaniards routed the defenders of the town in open field, then sacked the place and burnt it to ashes, and retreated, carrying away two merchant-ships they found in the harbour. From thence they went to Dartmouth, where they saw so many men-at-arms ready to receive them on the shore that they declined to try their fortune

there; so they went back to make an attack on Plymouth, where also the inhabitants gave them so warm a reception with bombards and cannons that they failed to effect anything, and a stiff breeze coming on, and there being then no breakwater, the French and Spanish galleys had a bad time of it in Plymouth Sound, and their ships were in great danger of being driven on the rocks, but they got out to sea again and bore away to Portland. The whole south of England by this time was aware that this predatory squadron was prowling along the coast, and no sooner did their ships appear in sight than the inhabitants of the island of Portland, amounting to about 200, carried off their wives and children to caverns in the rocks and left their town to be pillaged. The French here began to burn the houses, and Gamez says the Castilians prevented them all they could because the population was poor and they had pity upon them. According to Gamez, only one Castilian set fire to the thatched roof of a cottage and that *would* not burn, but directly a Frenchman set a house on fire it was all in flames in a minute. The attack was made at high water, when Portland is an island and separate from the mainland; but the inhabitants of the mainland, having become aware of the attack on the island, collected together on the shore, prepared to pass over when the tide should fall, and a fight ensued before the French and Spaniards could get away, in which they had several wounded. After this the French and Spanish squadrons go to Pool, which the French captain had an especial desire to put to pillage, because he heard the town belonged to one Harry Paye, called Arripay in Gamez's narrative, a famous English sea-captain in those days, who was warden also of the Cinque Ports, and had frightfully worried French commerce, having made a single swoop at one time of 120 rich French merchant-ships. His flag was the terror of the Channel, and was dreaded as far as Gijon and Finisterre, which latter place he had burnt, having carried away a miraculous crucifix from the church of Santa Maria de Finisterre. They landed at Pool and had a desperate fight with the inhabitants and men-at-arms. They succeeded in burning part of the town and carrying off a great deal of booty, but before they had finished their operations, so many men-at-arms, archers, and horsemen came against them from the surrounding country, that they were obliged to retreat to their ships. The quiet borough of Pool resounded that day with the voice of Pero Niño, crying, "*Sant Iago! Sant Iago!*" and with the clangour of Spanish trumpets. Arrows were shot so thickly that Gamez says, at the end of the fight the ground was strewed with them so deeply that you could take up a handful at a time. It appears by Gamez that the brother of Harry Paye was there and was killed. Nevertheless both French and Spaniards seem to have thought it creditable to have been able to make a retreat in good order, concluding they had nothing to get but plenty of fighting by staying longer at Pool. So at Pool they bore away for Southampton, and entered Southampton Water. Winter was now coming on, and the advice of the pilots was that they should return to pass the winter in some French port.

But Pero Niño had sworn to pay a visit to London before he left the English coast, and, as he appears to have been an obstinate fellow, the pilots, no doubt to shorten the voyage, persuaded him that the way to town was up Southampton Water, for Pero Niño and Gamez, his *alferez*, were persuaded to their last days that they saw London, with their own eyes, at the top of Southampton Water. They did nothing particular in Southampton Water; they saw a town, evidently Southampton, but which, doubtless, the pilots, to satisfy Pero Niño, declared to be London, and so got him to row away for France, past the Isle of Wight, past Jersey and Guernsey and Alderney, to Harfleur. After winding up this expedition, the worthy *alferez*, Gutierre Diaz de Gamez, sums up the rules which a Christian man must observe in this kind of predatory warfare to obtain salvation—for he says salvation is to be got even by this filibustering kind of work. Firstly, he must spare his enemy when he is down; secondly, he must respect the churches, and all those who take refuge there; thirdly, he must respect the women; fourthly, he must not burn harvests or houses—all which precepts his captain, Pero Niño, fully observed, except at Pool, on the lands of Harry Paye (forgetting, apparently, the slight affair at St. Erth, where they burnt the whole town). Next year, the French and Spanish galleys put again to sea, and had a fight with a large English squadron, which Gamez believed was under the direction of the redoubtable Harry Paye; but it appears most likely he was mistaken: at all events, even according to Gamez's account, the French and Spanish did not get any advantage in the conflict, and the *alferez* makes a long address to Wind and Fortune to reproach them for their inconstancy to his master on this occasion.

Soon after this Pero Niño got up an expedition against Jersey—had a sanguinary fight there—burnt the island, and put the chief town to ransom: after which he returned to Spain, where he obtained a splendid reception from his foster-brother the king, Don Henrique, who, with his own hand, dubbed him a knight on that occasion, and gave a great banquet in his honour, at which time also he said,—“Pedro Niño, my will is to raise you up to a far greater estate, and to give you command of some great honourable enterprise.” But alas! for human hope—Don Henrique died shortly after, in 1406, at the age of twenty-eight, and all the expectations Pero Niño founded on the goodwill of his foster-brother were annihilated. Nevertheless, Pero Niño was now become Don Pedro Niño, and looked upon generally as a rising man.

Don Henrique left a little son a year old—Don Juan II.—and this poor infant, in such rude times, had a hard life of it among the fierce crowd of *infantes*, *adelantados*, *mayordomos*, *condestables*, and feudal chiefs and barons, all wanting to have their own way. A long minority, as we have said, never then failed to be a calamitous period for the nation: hence, many advised Don Fernando, the eldest brother of the last king, to take the crown for himself; but he refused, and assumed the regency in the name of his infant nephew, and governed the kingdom in such fashion

that he gained the surname of Don Fernando the Honest. But he died in 1416, and in him Pedro Niño lost another protector in whom he had begun to place great hope of advancement.

Pero Niño's public life now belongs to the general history of Spain—for he took a leading part, on one side or the other, and not always a loyal one, in the factions and disorders which disturbed the whole reign of Don Juan II. Pero Niño was created Conde de Buelna by Don Juan II. on the eve of a battle under the walls of Granada, during a campaign which his master had undertaken against the Moors. His testament enables us to discover that he had found fighting, on the whole, a prosperous affair, for he had contrived to get together a goodly number of fiefs and castles. In the province of Burgos he possessed Villagomez, Montuenga, Fresnoso, and Fuente-Burueva; in the province of Palencia, Torre de Momojon, Calavar and Quintanilla; in the province of Valladolid, Cigales and Villa Baquerin; in Estremadura, Valverde, Talavar and Arroyo di Puerto; in the two Asturias, the Valley of Buelna, Carrejo, Sante Lucia, Santivañez, and the toll of the bridge on the Saja.

Not that after all Pero Niño had become a great noble for Spain, where Don Ferrant Perez de Guzman looked with contempt on Don Juan Gonzales de Avellaneda as a small country squire, since he only possessed 2,000 vassals and only kept a hundred men-at-arms in his castle, and where the king, Don Pedro, in 1360, had to raze eighty castles, the property of one rebel subject, Don Diego Perez Sarmiento.

Pero Niño's marriages and love-affairs occupy a very considerable portion of his memoirs by his *alferes*, for one of the fine qualities which the good Gamez manages to discover in Pero Niño, was his good taste in love-matters. For "as much as he was valiant, and excelled in chivalry all the other knights of his time, so much he distinguished himself in placing his love always in high places."

He was married first, at about the age of twenty-two, to Doña Constanza de Guevara, a widow lady of great family, whom he had met with in the house of Don Ruy Lopez Davalos, the *condestable* of Spain, his early patron. Doña Constanza only survived the marriage four years; but hardly a year had passed from her death, when Pero Niño, during his stay in France, had a very serious love-affair with Madame de Serifontaine, widow of the Grand Admiral of France, Renaud de Trie. For Gamez tells us that Pero Niño lived on terms of great familiarity with the nobles and gentlemen of France, and soon was at home in their manners and customs and polite ways,—since a small lesson suffices for some, while to others great teaching is no profit. With Pero Niño all courtesy was natural, and politeness was as easy to him as drawing breath.

As for the French, it is well to know what sort of character the *alferes*, who was always in company with his master, gave them at this period. The French, he says, "are a noble nation; they are wise, intelligent, and refined in all things which belong to good education, courtesy, and nobility; they are very elegant in their clothes, and magnificent in their

equipages. They are very nice in their attire; they are liberal and great givers of presents; they like to give pleasure to all the world; they treat strangers with great honour; they can bestow praise, especially on fine actions; they are not malicious; they are not contentious, except in matters of honour; they are very courteous and graceful in their speech; both men and women are very gay, and fond of amusement; they are very amorous, and make no secret of it." And here the worthy Gamez says, they attribute their amorous tendencies to the fact that their country is subject to the influence of the star Venus; but he seriously and at length refutes the supposition on religious grounds.

While, then, Pero Niño was wintering in France, waiting for the season to arrive to make another descent on the English coast, he ascended with his galleys to Rouen. Renaud de Trie, *Seigneur* of Serifontaine and Admiral of France, was captain of the Château of Rouen. But the admiral was old now, and broken down with long and hard service by sea and land. The worn-out veteran had retired to his castle of Serifontaine in the Vexin, near Gisors, and lived there with his wife. Hearing, however, that the Spanish captain who had just done good service against the English was come up to pass the winter at Rouen, he sent to him and invited him to come and pass some time at Serifontaine, and repose himself from the hardships of seafaring and sacking little towns.

The account of château-life in France from the pages of the *alferez*, carries us quite back to the days of the *seigneurs* and *châtelaines* of the fourteenth century. The château of the admiral consisted of a group of buildings surrounded by a fortification and moat. The *châtelaine* lived in a different building from her lord, and there was even a drawbridge between the two constructions. There was a large chapel, in which mass was said every day. A river ran in front of the château, on the banks of which were orchards and gardens. There was a large fish-pond behind the château, surrounded by a wall, and kept locked up with a key, from which fish could be daily taken sufficient for three hundred persons. The admiral had his servitors and pages, and his lady, who was one of the most beautiful and high-born women of France, and whose maiden name was Jeanne de Bellengues, had likewise her ten ladies of high birth, richly dressed and well lodged, and with no other duties but that of making a good appearance and pleasant society for the lady of the castle, since there were, besides them, abundance of waiting-maids. There were minstrels and players on the horn. There was a pack of forty or fifty hounds, with a body of huntsmen, whippers-in, and kennel-keepers. Of the number of horses an idea may be formed by the fact that there were twenty different private mounts for the lord of the castle, among which were chargers, palfreys, hunters, and hackneys. There were, besides, falcons and heronries. There were extensive forests close to the château, full of stags and deer and wild boars; the house was provided with everything just as though it had been in the centre of Paris; and its furniture was magnificent.

The châtelaine was a person of great intelligence, and took charge of the management of her lord's estates, as well as of the household, so that it was impossible to see things better ordered.

In the summer-time, immediately after she was dressed, the châtelaine went out with all her ladies to a bower in the garden; each one took her *liere d'heures* and her rosary, and they remained there apart, and never spoke, till they had finished their prayers. Then they gathered violets and other flowers, and returned to the château and heard mass. Then they breakfasted on plates of silver, on roast-fowls, or larks, or other birds, and took a little wine. Then madame went with all her ladies on palfreys finely caparisoned for a promenade, having invited the knights and gentlemen to ride with them. And they chanted, on the way, *lais, deslais, virelais, rondeaux*, ballads, and *complaintes*. "Such a life!" says the *alferez*, "that if it could but last, one would wish for no other Paradise."

Pero Niño was received at once as a favoured guest by the admiral and his lady. He dined with them at a table on the high *dais*, while the *maître-d'hôtel* presided at the table where the *alferez* sat, and where a knight or squire was seated by the side of each lady. As for the conversation it ran all on feats of arms and love-matters, while a band of musicians played all the time of the dinner. After dinner the tables were removed, and the minstrels came, and Pero Niño danced with the mistress of the house, and every knight with his lady. When the dance was over every dancer kissed his partner. Then spiced sweetmeats were brought, wine was served, and each one went away to take a *siesta*. After the *siesta* the whole party took again to horseback. Pages arrived with falcons. Madame took her falcon on her fist and placed herself ready for the pages to start the heron, and then she let fly her falcon so gracefully that nothing could be better. There is a tone of quite pathetic regret in the sentences where Gamez speaks of these scenes—of dogs scouring, of drums and trumpets sounding, of hawks wheeling back to their lures, and knights and ladies along the river taking such pleasures as, he says, are beyond description.

After they had ridden through the valley madame got off her palfrey and took her seat on the grass, and cold fowls, and partridges, and fruits, and wine were produced from panniers, and all ate and drank, and returned with songs and chants to the château. In the evening there was supper—late in the winter time, early if it was summer—for then madame took a walk in the woods, and those who would played at bowls. When night came the guests were conducted to the great hall with torches, and supper was had; and the minstrels came again, and they danced deep into the night, then fruits and wine were served, and the company departed to sleep.

Such was the life Pero Niño lived at the château of Serifontaine for a time. He speedily acquired the good graces of the lady of the house, and since during the stay of Pero Niño in France her husband, the admiral, after having been for some time in a bedridden state, died, Jeanne de

Bellengues sent for Pero Niño to console her, and he consoled her so well that there was talk of marriage between them, and they appear indeed to have been affianced; but it seemed not decent to Jeanne de Bellengues to marry so soon after her first husband's death, and it was agreed to defer the matter; indeed both parties were married very shortly after, but not to each other, for Jeanne de Bellengues married Jean Malet Sire de Graville, grand falconer, bread-bearer, and master of the crossbowmen of the King of France. Pero Niño, however, if we may judge from a discreet line of his *alferez*, seems not to have come up to the latter's idea of constancy, for it appears Madame de Serifontaine was waiting for Pero Niño in good faith in France, when he sent her word from Spain (as the *alferez* says, it was quite right that he should) that he released her from her engagement; for Pero Niño was then doing his best to win the hand of Doña Beatriz de Portugal. Doña Beatriz was of royal blood, being the daughter of an Infant of Portugal, and was a better match for Pero Niño than was Madame de Serifontaine. Her father, Don Juan, had incurred the deadly enmity of his sister-in-law, the Queen of Portugal, who had been plain Doña Leonor Tellez. After enacting a small domestic tragedy in Portugal (in fact he had put to death his wife, who was the sister of Leonor Tellez, because Leonor Tellez had, with views of her own, caused Don Juan to believe his wife was unfaithful), he was obliged to seek refuge in Castile in the life-time of Don Henrique. Don Henrique had married him in his lifetime to his half-sister, the Infante Doña Custança, and of this marriage came two daughters, Doña Maria and Doña Beatriz: Doña Beatriz thus was a royal heiress both in Spain and in Portugal. She was first affianced to a son of the Regent, but the King of Aragon having demanded her hand of Don Fernando, the Regent for political reasons resigned for his son the alliance with Doña Beatriz. But the King of Aragon died, and Doña Beatriz, not a little disgusted at being tossed about thus from one to another, determined to look out for a husband for herself. The court was at Valladolid, and great *fêtes*, and joustings and *juegos de cañas* were being celebrated there, for the Queen of Navarre had come to Spain to visit her uncle, Don Fernando the Regent, with a suite of grand seigneurs and noble knights, and at all the joustings and jereed matches, Pero Niño, (who was now thirty-one, and a known performer in this line,) with five knights wearing the arms of his house, cut a splendid figure, and attracted the attention of Doña Beatriz, who herself was now about twenty-four years of age.

The first occasion on which she remarked Pero Niño was at a tournament held in the street in which her house was situate at Valladolid. Pero Niño having unhorsed one of the greatest grandees of Spain, a dispute arose between herself and her ladies as to the manner in which it was done; and as she took Pero Niño's side very enthusiastically her words were carried to him: so Pero Niño determined to win, if possible, the hand of the royal heiress, whose spirit, as subsequent events proved, equalled her fortune. His first step was to get the ladies about her to say a good word for him on every occasion, and to talk of the deeds of prowess

he had done ; his next, to find an ambassadress, to send her a message, and ask leave to serve her as her knight, since he was prepared to love her to the death as having more generosity than all the queens of Spain. At this message Doña Beatriz changed colour and replied nothing. But the ladies around her, gained over by Pero Niño, still continued to chant his praises, till Doña Beatriz, professing to be sceptical of their truth, ordered them to speak no more of that knight, of whom she had heard an opposite account. Perhaps this was a device on the part of Doña Beatriz to bring Pero Niño forward ; for very soon after, as she was going down the street for her daily ride, she found Pero Niño waiting there, and, as fortune would have it, the street was so encumbered that she could do no other-wise than let Pero Niño take the rein of her palfrey to guide her, upon which Pero Niño spoke to her for the first time, and repeated the declaration he had made by message : upon which Doña Beatriz replied that "women should always hold men's protestations in suspicion," but that she would take the advice of those bound to guide her and she would give him a reply. No reply, however, came till Pero Niño managed to enlist in his service the favour of Doña Beatriz's illegitimate half-brother—Don Fernando—himself a loyal knight and a comrade of Pero Niño, who undertook to use all his influence with his sister—being of opinion that it was for her honour, after the failure of royal and other marriage schemes, and since her hand was the subject of daily intrigue, that she should be speedily married ; and that she could find no more loyal knight for a husband than Pero Niño, however much higher she might look and longer she might wait. It is far foreseen on both sides that such a marriage would be displeasing to the Infant Don Fernando the Regent, and that he would prevent it by all the means in his power.

The end, however, of the intercession of Beatriz's half-brother was that she sent a message to Pero Niño to the effect that, although she knew the difficulties and dangers which might ensue from an engagement with him, yet, if he was willing to pledge himself to carry the matter through to the last extremity, she, on her side, was decided to follow the advice of her brother and others who had counselled her, in consideration of the respect they had for Pero Niño's knighthood, and that she thought there was no other knight but he in the kingdom capable of undertaking so difficult an enterprise. A spirited and courageous young lady, we see, this Doña Beatriz de Portugal. For the peril was no slight one on either side, since it was nothing less than high treason, with all its consequences, for Pero Niño to attempt to ally himself with a royal lady unknown to the Regent, and Doña Beatriz herself might expect nothing short of imprisonment. In consequence of this message, a secret betrothal was solemnized by a priest in the presence of the brother of Doña Beatriz and other noble persons ; after which Pero Niño undertook to break the matter to the Regent. He approached him by degrees, speaking on the subject of marriage in general in person, and, finally, through the royal confessor, informed him that his views were directed to Doña Beatriz. The Regent

sent word that he was to mention that topic no more, since Doña Beatriz's marriage was his affair. However, those about the Regent who were envious of Pero Niño gave him to understand that he was being deceived, and he sent for Pero Niño to have an explanation.

Pedro Niño did not avow the betrothal, but spoke so boldly in support of his claims to be admitted as a suitor of the lady, that the courtiers thought the Regent would immediately order him to be arrested. Many a grandee had had his head taken off for a less matter; but Don Fernando the Honest was a mild and generous prince, and he let Pero Niño depart freely from his presence. The audacious suitor prudently left the court at once to take refuge with the queen-mother, whom he had gained over to his side. Doña Beatriz was now sent for by the Regent and his lady, the Infante, and asked to state what had really taken place between her and Pero Niño. Doña Beatriz, knowing that Pero Niño had gone away and placed himself in safety, now boldly avowed the betrothal, and argued at length in justification of her choice. She was told she had done a villainous action. She replied she was willing to undergo any punishment it would entail on her, and was retained as a prisoner at large in the suite of the queen. Menaces and cajoleries were tried by turns upon her to make her renounce her engagement with Pero Niño, but she withstood them all, and said she would never take any other husband, and would die for him if need were. She was then, to terrify her into submission, sent to the fortress of Uruña, in the province of Valladolid, as a state prisoner, with a suite of ladies, with orders that she should be kept in strict seclusion—not a man was to be allowed to speak with her. Nevertheless, Pero Niño, at the suggestion of the queen-mother, whose retreat at Magaz was invaded by the emissaries of the Regent demanding the surrender of her refugee, had escaped to Bayonne—and from thence he made three or four clandestine visits to his betrothed, and contrived to see her during the time she was immured at Uruña. He might, the *alferes* says, have carried her off if he pleased, but he thought such a proceeding not suited to his honour, and was determined to get the public consent of the Regent. The intercession of the queen-mother, and the want which the Regent felt in his approaching campaign with the Moors for a strong man of war like Don Pedro Niño, worked together in obtaining the pardon of the offender and the royal recognition of his marriage. Pedro Niño returned back into Spain, Doña Beatriz was liberated, and their marriage was celebrated with great pomp at Cigales. This, then, was a love-match as romantic as any in the list of hymeneal transactions, and it appears to have been a very happy one. It lasted thirty-six years, when, says Gamez, "the noble Condesa Beatriz de Portugal died at the age of sixty, and the day she died, there did not remain in all Spain another noble lady, or *hidalga*, so good or so beautiful as she. Her *conde* and good friend remained sad and afflicted, and will be so all his life, which has now reached its seventieth year."

But alas for human constancy and the previsions of the good *alferes*!

the noble Conde de Buelna consoled himself, and married a third time, with one Juana de Zuñiga. The only cause one can find for this unfaithfulness of the Conde de Buelna to the memory of his high-spirited and devoted Doña Beatriz is, that the marriage seems to have formed part of a family arrangement at the time one of his daughters was married to a Zuñiga, to divide the government of Valladolid peaceably between two families who were always in contention ; but at all events, Pedro Niño was buried by the side of Doña Beatriz.

Pedro Niño, Conde de Buelna, lived long enough to learn the truth of the proverb, "Call no man happy till his last day," for his last will and testament, drawn up a few days before his death, shows a very different state of affairs to one of which record remains, and which was drawn up twenty years earlier. His Doña Beatriz was then by his side, he was in the plenitude of health, strength, and power, and was surrounded by a magnificent family of children, two sons and four daughters, for some of whom he had contracted alliances with the most splendid families of Spain.

By his first will he desired to be buried in full armour, with the purple cap of nobility on his head, and his sword on his breast, and the inscription *siempre vencedor, jamas vencido* on his tomb ; but at the date of his last will the place of his long-lived countess was occupied by a strange wife, his two sons had long been dead—one of them, called Don Juan Niño de Portugal, had shown signs of greater promise even than his father in his youth, and Gamez speaks with mournful admiration of sundry deeds of prowess of his enacted before he was twenty-four, the age at which he died. His favourite daughter, too, was dead, and another had retired into a monastery, and was now an abbess. His two remaining daughters, however, married well. They inherited together the valley of Buelna, and divided his large possessions between them ; and they carried these and the name of Niño into the great families of the Herreras and Zuñigas, from whom the name of Niño has again passed into some of the noblest houses of Spain.

Quarrels with neighbours and quarrels with collateral relations embittered still more these last mournful days of Pedro Niño ; and the great sign of the changed spirit of the man is, that he no longer desires to be buried in full armour, with his earl's coronet on his head, and his sword on his breast. No, he will be laid by the side of his countess, in the brown robe of a Capuchin friar. And various other indications can be gathered from Pedro Niño's last will, of a high spirit brought down to humility, and of death regarded as a deliverance.

As for his faithful *alferez*, he would appear to have died soon after the composition of his narrative, for there is no mention of him in the second will. Possibly at the date of the last the honest-hearted follower had no longer need of the very meagre pension of 8,000 *maravedis* provided for him by the first testament.

